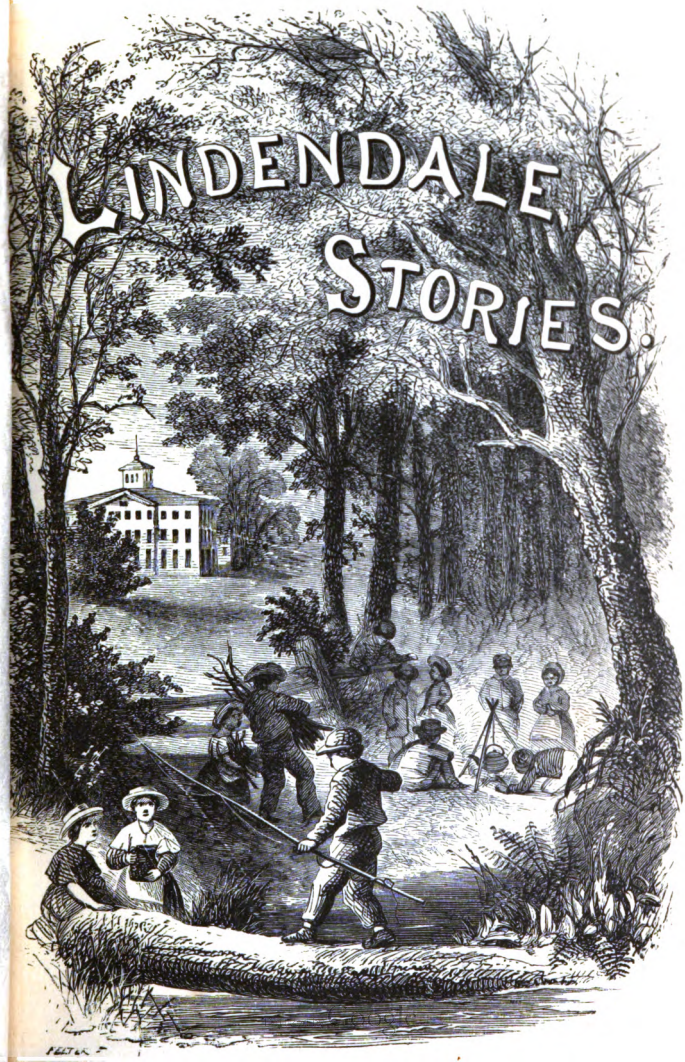

LINDENDALE
STORIES.

LINDENDALE STORIES.

LOUIS SINCLAIR;

OR

THE SILVER PRIZE MEDALS.

The Story of a Boy

WHO ESCAPED FROM THE HANDS OF A REAL ENCHANTER.

BY

LAWRENCE LANCEWOOD, Esq.

BOSTON:
GRAVES AND YOUNG,
24 CORNHILL,
1867.

Digitized by Google

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1867, by
GRAVES & YOUNG,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the District of
Massachusetts.

Digitized by Google

To the

BOYS AND GIRLS OF AMERICA.

TO EVERY BOY WHO ASPIRES TO GROW INTO AN UPRIGHT AND NOBLE MAN, AND TO EVERY GIRL WHO WISHES TO BECOME A TRUE AND EXCELLENT WOMAN, THESE

LINDENDALE STORIES

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED, BY THEIR SINCERE OLD FRIEND,

LAWRENCE LANCEWOOD.

LANCEWOOD HALL, FEB. 20, 1865.

Digitized by Google

THE LINDENDALE STORIES.

I. . . . . SIDNEY DE GREY.

II. . . . . NELLIE WARREN.

III. . . . . LOUIS SINCLAIR.

IV. . . . . COUSIN CLARA.

V. . . . . PETER CLINTON.

Digitized by Google

Silver Prize

Louis' Regol

Louis' Cha

Louis' Fir

A Candy

Shamrock

A Fresh

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Silver Prize Medals 11

CHAPTER II.

Louis' Resolution 23

CHAPTER III.

Louis' Chains 34

CHAPTER IV.

Louis' First Success 45

CHAPTER V.

A Candy Scrape 56

CHAPTER VI.

Shamming Sickness 71

CHAPTER VII.

A Fresh Start 86

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

SUCCESS AND ITS TRIALS 102

CHAPTER IX.

A CORN ROASTING PARTY 117

CHAPTER X.

LOUIS FINDS A RUDDER 131

CHAPTER XI.

TESTS AND TRIALS 146

CHAPTER XII.

THE CRAYON ON THE WALL 160

CHAPTER XIII.

CONFESSIONS AND PUNISHMENTS 174

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HERO OF THE HOUR 189

CHAPTER XV.

BOBBING FOR EELS 205

CHAPTER XVI.

WHO WON THE PRIZES? 224

Digitized by Google

LOUIS SINCLAIR.

CHAPTER I.

PRIZE MEDALS.

"HOLIDAYS are over, boys. Study is the word, now. We must bid good-by to play, and give work, brain-work, a hearty welcome."

Thus spoke Sidney De Grey to a group of boys who were sitting on and around a large moss-covered rock under the linden trees which grew near the Lindendale Academy. They were waiting for the ringing of the bell which was to summon them to the opening of the autumn term.

Digitized by Google

"I say it is too bad to be obliged to go to school this splendid morning!" replied Peter Clipton; and then, pushing his fist against the ribs of a boy who was stretched at full length upon the rock, he added, "don't you think so, Louis?"

"I think you had better not punch my ribs again, Master Pete," retorted Louis Sinclair, rising to a sitting posture, and rubbing his side.

"I didn't mean to hurt you, Louis," said Peter; "but tell me if you don't think it an outrage for school to begin on such a glorious morning as this?"

"I think school is a bore, anyhow," replied Louis. "I wish school-teachers, school-books, and schoolhouses were all at the Cannibal Islands, then we should have holidays all the year round. In that case I should be as happy as a cricket."

"And know as little," added Sidney.

"What matter?" responded Louis. "Of

Digitized by Google

what use is knowledge? I'd rather be jolly than learned, any day. I think learned people are very stupid."

"Our teacher, for example," suggested Godfrey Warren, who had been quietly listening to their conversation, and had just risen to his feet.

"Our teacher is a soft cake," retorted Louis.

"A soft cake? Not he. That won't do, Mr. Louis. There's more of the soft cake in your little toe than in Mr. Mildman's whole body," rejoined Godfrey.

"You're right there," said Godfrey's brother, Robert; "there's nothing soft in Mr. Mildman. He's as sharp as the north wind in January."

"That's so!" added Sidney, with emphasis; "and it's knowledge that sharpens his wits. Louis is altogether wrong in his notions about knowledge. It is ignorance, not learn-

Digitized by Google

ing, that makes people stupid. Knowledge is power, as Louis will find out one of these days if he don't bestir himself and stick to his books. He'll find that ignorance is weakness too, or I'll lose my guess."

"Louis don't believe what he says," remarked Peter, by way of apology for his friend.

"Then he shouldn't say it," rejoined Sidney. "It isn't honest to say one thing and mean another; but there's the bell! Let us see who will be in school first."

"Here goes then!" cried Peter, leaping from the rock, seizing his bundle of books, and running toward the Academy. The others followed him swiftly, except Louis, who, though somewhat crestfallen, would not hasten. With slow steps he followed his friends, and only reached his seat just in time to escape a late mark.

Of course there was very little to be done in

Digitized by Google

the way of study that morning. New scholars had to be examined and placed in suitable classes. Lessons had to be given out, and various other miscellaneous matters attended to. Moreover it was difficult for the boys, after a long vacation, mostly spent in play, to settle to their school work. Their teacher, who had not forgotten his own boy-life, understood this and did not draw the reins of discipline very tight that morning. Indeed, he did not attempt to start the classes on the routine of the term. He merely marked out their work, heard the various classes read, and made a very pleasant and sensible address to the school, on the duty and benefits of being diligent in study. At the close of his "talk," as he termed it, he said, —

"And now, boys, I have something to offer you by way of spurring you to diligence. Three beautiful silver medals have been placed in my hands by three gentlemen living in our

Digitized by Google

village. These medals are for your competition. One is to be given to that scholar who shall excel in composition. Another to him who shall pass the best examination in all branches of study. The other is for him who shall most strictly keep the rules of the Academy. These medals are both valuable and beautiful. Look at them."

Here the teacher held up the medals in full view of the students. They were of solid silver, about the size of a quarter of a dollar, and inscribed with appropriate legends. This exhibition was followed by general murmurs of applause from the scholars, and such whispered expressions as, "First-rate!" "Splendid!" and "Bully!" reached the teacher's ear. The last word seemed to displease him, for he frowned a little and said,—

"I am sorry to hear such a word as bully even whispered by any student in this Academy. It is vulgar, and should never pass the lips of an educated boy."

Digitized by Google

The boys looked at each other as if each were searching for the speaker of that low, but too frequently used word. In truth nearly every one felt ashamed because of his own habit of using it. The teacher, without further allusion to it, resumed his remarks. Said he,

"If these medals were intended as *rewards*, I would not be a party to their bestowal. I want my pupils to feel that hard, honest study carries its own reward with it. Study puts you in possession of knowledge, which is power, strength, influence, and pleasure. These are *rewards* enough to satisfy any virtuous boy without the addition of gifts. But these medals are meant to serve as spurs to increase your efforts to deserve the approval of your friends. Boys lag a little sometimes, and perhaps need something tangible to help them on. I hope these medals will keep you all up to your mettle, and that, although only three of you

Digitized by Google

can win them, all of you will prove yourselves worthy of them. You are now dismissed until to-morrow morning, when I shall expect you to be ready to begin the work of the term in good earnest."

The boys were what they termed "jolly" over this announcement. Books quickly disappeared from the tops of desks, and there was a general movement toward the door. They were no sooner outside than they sent up a grand huzza for their teacher, and then, dividing into groups, were soon scattered over the common or seated under the linden trees.

"Well, Sid.," said Peter Clinton, who had climbed to the top of the mossy rock around which his companions were lounging, "I suppose you mean to win all these medals, don't you?"

"I shall do my best to deserve them all, even if I do not win one," replied Sidney.

"You are very modest in your talk this

Digitized by Google

morning, Mr. Sid.," rejoined Peter, "and yet I'll bet that in your heart you think you will win them all."

"I'll bet he won't, for I mean to win two of them at least," said Godfrey Warren, proudly.

"Better win them all three while you're about it," said Louis Sinclair, with a slight sneer.

"I would if I didn't pity you enough to leave one for you," retorted Godfrey. "The one that's for keeping the rules will suit you to a 't,' because you are a good boy and can behave yourself, though you haven't the ghost of a chance on the one for composition or excellence in study."

"That's more than you can tell," said Louis, with spirit. "I guess I could study as well as you if I had a mind to try."

"A mind to try, hey?" retorted Godfrey, in a mocking voice. "That's just it. You haven't such a mind; and, what is more, you

Digitized by Google

are not likely to have it. You belong to the drowsy-head family."

"Don't be too hard on poor Louis," pleaded Peter. "If he can't study he can't, and he is no more to blame for that than he would be for not being able to see, if he was blind."

"Why, Pete! what do you mean?" queried Sidney. "Your defence of Louis is worse than Godfrey's attack. You make him an incapable fellow, which I think is a slander."

"It isn't a slander, either," said Godfrey. "He is at the foot of all his classes. Do you think he'd be there if he could help it? Not he."

"I say I can help it!" cried Louis, in a loud, imperious voice, very unusual for him. Then, starting to his feet, he looked angrily, almost fiercely on his companions, and started for home on a quick run. Evidently the remarks of Godfrey had *stung* him.

Sidney, who felt hurt because Louis was

Digitized by Google

grieved, called after him, but he only ran faster, as if resolved to be rid of their company.

"You were very unkind, Godfrey," remarked Sidney, preparing to follow Louis.

"Pooh!" replied Godfrey, with a sneer, "Louis' feelings are not so easily hurt. In fact, I don't think he has any feeling except in his palate. Eating and sleeping are about the only things he knows how to do well. If medals were to be given to him who eats the biggest dinners, and sleeps the most hours during the term, he'd get them all. Ha! ha! ha!"

The boys all laughed at this most unkind speech, Sidney excepted. He felt that they were too hard on his indolent friend, and, looking very gravely upon his companions, he said,—

"Louis is as well able to win a medal as the best of us; and, mark me, he'll do it."

Digitized by Google

This prophecy was greeted with loud laughter. When it subsided, Godfrey pointed to Sidney, who was now walking homewards, and said, —

"There goes Saint Sidney, the Lindendale prophet."

Warren thought this speech very witty. I think it was silly. What do you think?

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

LOUIS' RESOLUTION.

LOUIS reached his home in a very painful state of mind. The words "drowsy-head," and "incapable fellow," kept buzzing in his ears like the song of a mosquito. They also stung his heart painfully. Hitherto he had been indifferent under his reputation for poor scholarship, but to-day he was restless and unhappy. Perhaps the boys had never spoken so plainly, never joked so truthfully before. Certainly he had never been so moved about his standing at school. His face, usually so bright, and even merry, was so clouded and sad that his mother noticed it when he sat down to dinner.

Digitized by Google

"Louis, my dear, what ails you to-day?" she asked.

"The boys have insulted me," replied he, in a bitter tone.

"Insulted you? That was very wrong on their part. I hope you gave them no occasion."

"Not a bit of it, ma. It was about some medals to be given for good scholarship at school. They said I couldn't win one of them, except for behavior, if I tried; that I couldn't help being behind in my studies; and many other things that made me feel bad. They talked as if they thought me a booby or an idiot. I've a great mind never to speak to Pete, Godfrey, or Robert again."

Mrs. Sinclair knew that her son was a poor scholar. She also knew that he was naturally as bright as any boy in Lindendale. She had often tried in vain to rouse him from his indolent habits. She was not sorry therefore, to

Digitized by Google

see him so deeply moved. She felt that a very sharp spur was needed to excite him to wage successful war upon his easy, slothful nature. Hence, instead of trying to soothe his feelings, she sought to quicken and give them right direction.

"Suppose you should avoid your old friends, my dear," asked she, "would that make you a better scholar?"

"I suppose not," replied Louis, curtly.

"Would it not be better revenge, my son, if you permitted their speeches to goad you to strive for that scholarship which they say you cannot attain? Wouldn't they feel ashamed of their unkind words if they should see you honored with a medal at the end of the next term?"

"I suppose so," said Louis, slowly and thoughtfully. After a brief pause he looked earnestly into his mother's eyes and asked,—

"Do you think I could become a good scholar if I tried?"

Digitized by Google

"I think you have the ability to become the equal, at least, of the best scholar in the Academy," replied his mother, with a look of pride and fondness.

Louis felt his heart swell with affection for his mother, as she uttered these words. Tears moistened his eyes as he rejoined, —

"I'm glad you have faith in me, mother. I believe Sidney De Grey thinks as you do, but," — here a shadow crept over Louis' face, "what does pa think of me?"

"He thinks you have as fine powers as any boy could wish, and that if you were not bound with two chains to the car of an enchanter, you might become a learned and eminent man."

"An enchanter? There are no enchanters, ma. What does father mean?"

"He calls SELFISHNESS an enchanter. By the two chains which bind you, he means IDLENESS and GLUTTONY. Do you remember your wish at Uncle Joe's picnic a few weeks since?"

Digitized by Google

Louis blushed as he replied, "Yes; I wished for plenty to eat, and nothing to do."

"It was that wish which made your father say what he did about the enchanter and the chains. He said it sadly, my son, because he feared you would never break the spell that is on you. If you do not, he knows and I know that you will become a useless, miserable creature. Idleness will make you poor and keep you ignorant. Gluttony will destroy your health and shorten your life. O, that my dear, dear boy would break these fatal chains and make his escape from this terrible enchanter's power!"

Louis was deeply moved. The tones and manner of his mother more than her words, showed him how keenly she felt his weaknesses and how greatly she dreaded their effects on his future life. Her earnestness penetrated his heart. His bosom swelled with feeling. Big tears trickled down his rounded cheeks. Drop-

Digitized by Google

ping his knife and fork, he rose from his chair, went to her side, kissed her fondly, and said,

"Mother, don't fear for me. I can be a good scholar and I will. Pa's enchanter shan't make a slave of me any longer. For your sake I'll conquer him."

"Those are noble words, my son," said Mrs. Sinclair, returning his kiss. "They remind me of a boy who hated his studies as much as you do, but who, in the strength of God and a great resolution, conquered his dislike and became an eminent, useful, and good man."

"What was his name, ma?" inquired Louis quite eagerly, as he resumed his seat.

"Thomas F. Buxton. You must read his life. Up to his sixteenth year he was behind most lads of his age. He even hated study. He was not indolent, however, but a big lusty boy too fond of out-door sport to love useful knowledge. But when he woke up to the thought that he was disappointing the just ex-

Digitized by Google

pectations of his best friends, he made a resolution to overcome his dislike to study. He kept it firmly and graduated the first and best scholar in his class at college. What he did you can do, my son."

"And I will too, see if I don't ma," rejoined the excited boy, "and to begin with one of my chains, if you will excuse me, I will not take any of that nice pudding."

Mrs. Sinclair smiled her consent to this first act of self-denial and permitted Louis to leave the table and retire to his own room.

Seating himself in a rocking-chair near his chamber window Louis thought over the events of the morning and his conversation with his mother. I cannot set down all his thoughts, but he closed his meditations by springing from his chair and saying aloud:

"Wont Godfrey and the other fellows stare when they hear the teacher say, 'the medal for general excellence in study is awarded to Louis

Digitized by Google

Sinclair!' My! what a sensation there will be when I march up to the desk before all the scholars and the crowd to receive my medal! Wont my father be proud of me! And wont mother be happy! Guess they will. Well, I'm going in for that medal, and I'm bound to get it too."

Louis was a very ingenious boy, and in spite his indolent habits, had acquired considerable skill with the pen. In fact, his *aptitude* for improvement was uncommon. He could see into things easily and quickly. He had a splendid memory. His fingers were skilful with pen, tool, or plaything. Application only was needed to make him a superior scholar. Hence on this occasion, he thought it would be a good plan to write his newly formed resolution in large letters on paper and to hang it up where it would meet his eye whenever he entered his room.

Filled with this idea he went to his table-

Digitized by Google

drawer in search of materials. First he took out a half sheet of note paper, and, sitting down, wrote in good bold round hand, the words, "I can be the first scholar in my school and I will. Signed, Louis Sinclair."

"Pooh!" he exclaimed, as he pinned the paper to the wall; "this isn't half big enough. I'll write it twice as big on Bristol board."

Then Louis took down his resolution from the wall and proceeded to write it in large Roman letters on Bristol board. He had not written as far as the word scholar, however, before it occurred to him that it would look better in German text. He therefore threw aside the piece of paper on which he was writing, took another piece, and with great care and much skill began putting his resolution into beautiful German text.

This was slow work, but Louis toiled on in the *spirit* of his new-born purpose through the afternoon. At last it was finished and pinned

Digitized by Google

conspicuously on the wall, where it would meet his eye the first thing in the morning and whenever he entered the room. Standing near the door he surveyed his work very complacently.

"It looks beautifully," said he to himself. "Sid couldn't beat that, I know. It's a grand resolution too. I — can — be — the — first — scolar — hullo! what's this? S-c-o-l-a-r, eh? That don't seem quite right. Where's my dictionary?"

The word was soon found and with it the evidence of poor Louis' bad scholarship. He had left the h out of scholar, and his resolution must either be written over again or remain a swift witness of his past faults.

"Well," said he, scratching his head with a perplexed air, "I can't do that over again in that splendid text — but what's that? a whistle, eh? that's Pete. Wonder what he wants. Guess I'll go and see."

With these words he went down stairs, leav-

Digitized by Google

ing the paper with the false spelling on the wall. Poor Louis! His resolution was already broken, for there, on a chair, lay his lesson books unopened. Had he *kept* his purpose instead of *writing* it, he would have mastered his lessons for the next morning. His afternoon's work was the result of *misdirected* energy. But you cannot wonder that he failed as soon as he began to try, for you see that he tried in a wrong manner. His motives were pride, vanity and a desire to please his mother. The first two were only other forms of that selfishness which had made him an idler and a glutton; the last was a good motive, but it was not sufficient by itself to give him victory over his old enemies. He needed the spur of the still nobler motive, DUTY, and that aid from his Heavenly Father which is given only in answer to prayer. Louis had not thought of DUTY. Louis had NOT PRAYED for help to keep his resolution. Do you wonder that he failed?

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

LOUIS' CHAINS.

AS soon as Louis joined Peter Clinton at the door, the latter said, —

"You aren't mad with me are you, Louis?"

"Mad with you, Pete? What for?"

"Because I said to-day that you *couldn't* study."

"Well, I think you was rather hard upon a fellow to make him out little better than a fool; but then I am not mad with you, Pete, because I don't suppose you meant any harm."

"You're a brick, Louis, and I like you, whether you can study or not. I know I can't

Digitized by Google

do much in the book line, and what's more, I don't want to."

"Well I *can* if I like," replied Louis a little testily.

"But you won't like, I guess," rejoined Peter with a sly look at his friend.

"Perhaps I wont and then, again, perhaps I will," said Louis, doubting whether it were best or not to tell Peter of his famous resolution.

"I don't care a brass button whether you do or not," replied Peter, "only I want you to go grape gathering with me this afternoon."

"Grape gathering! Where? It's too late to go far on that business."

"It isn't far, Louis. It's only about a quarter of a mile back in the woods yonder. I know of a vine there, which is full of grapes. It's the earliest vine in these diggings, and the grapes are just ripe enough to pick. We can easily get back before dark. Come!"

Louis thought of his resolution and felt that

Digitized by Google

he ought to return to his room and study, and then he thought of the grapes, and said to himself, "I'll soon be back and then I'll put those lessons through in double quick time."

Thus did appetite conquer duty.

"Let us go it like race horses," said Louis, as he started on the run, with Peter at his heels.

"Go it, then," replied Peter, dashing after him in such rapid style, that he quickly overtook and passed him. Louis was too fat to run a race with his friend and when they reached the woods he was glad to see Peter stop, and sit upon a fallen tree to rest.

"Whew!" cried Louis breathing hard and quick. "I can't stand such running as this."

"You eat too much pudding," replied Peter laughing, "but come, let us be off again or it will be too dark to see the grapes."

Louis followed his companion as rapidly as he could. Peter led him straight to the grounds of Mr. Edsell, a gentleman who had built a

Digitized by Google

villa in the woods, and who had a splendid cold grapery near the footpath upon which the two boys were standing. Rich clusters of ripe grapes hanging in profusion upon the vines, were clearly visible through the glass of the grapery, Pointing toward them, Peter burst into a fit of violent laughter, as he cried:

"There, Louis, are the grapes I promised to show you. Help yourself! Ha, ha, ha!"

Louis saw that Peter had made him the subject of one of those practical jokes for which he was noted. He had shown him ripe grapes, but they were not for him to gather. At first he was inclined to be angry, but either his better nature or his indolence controlled him, and joining in his friend's laugh, he said:

"I'm fairly sold, but I don't see that I'm any worse off than you, Mr. Peter. If I'm fooled, so are you, for it has cost you as much running just to get a laugh at me, as it has cost me to be laughed at. I should think such fun would hardly pay."

Digitized by Google

"I guess you are more than half right," replied Peter looking sober.

After a little mutual banter, the boys walked slowly back to the village. When they reached the end of the principal cross street, Peter noticed that a travelling photographer had established his "saloon" on wheels, at a point where the level grade of the street ceased, and the ground began to slope off toward the bank of a brook, which ran through part of the village. It was very plain that if the carriage could be pushed down a few yards, it would run of itself down the sloping bank into the brook.

Peter was full of the spirit of mischief, and in spite of all his past mishaps and promises of amendment, was ever on the lookout for an opportunity to play off his "fun." Hence his eye took in the possibilities of this case, and his imagination revelled in the picture of the poor photographer's saloon standing in the middle of the brook. Rubbing his hands in wicked

Digitized by Google

glee at the thought, he nudged Louis on the shoulder, and said, —

"Louis, I can see some first rate fun ahead."

"Can you? Then you can see farther into the dark than I can. But what do you see?"

Peter pointed out the seeming ease with which the saloon might be started on its career to the brook. "Wouldn't that old picture-maker look glum," he exclaimed, "to see his machine in the water! Maybe he'd think the brook haunted by water spirits! and the village would be alive to-morrow, wondering how the thing got started."

Louis had enough of the spirit of mischief in him, to incline him to enter into Peter's proposition to start the saloon on its downward journey. He had a little more caution in his nature than his mad-cap friend, however, and saw that the project might have its difficulties. So he said, —

"But, Pete, suppose the old picture man

Digitized by Google

should be at home, and drop out upon us? Wouldn't he give us a licking?"

"First catch your hare, and then cook him, is my motto for him," replied Peter. "We will see he *don't* catch us. I'll soon find out if the old fellow is at home."

He then walked boldly up to the steps of the "Saloon," and rapped loudly at the door. There was a light burning inside, but no one answered Peter's knock. He knocked again, louder than before, but without obtaining any reply. So returning to Louis, he said, —

"The coast is clear. Let us start the machine!"

Then, after a cautious look into the now dusky street, they both went to the saloon and began to pull on the whipple-trees, the pole having been taken out and stowed snugly under the wagon. But though they pulled with all their strength, the wheels would not turn.

"There must be a choke before the wheels," whispered Peter. "Let us see!"

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PLAYING A JOKE. Page 41.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

There was nothing before the wheels, and they resumed their pulling.

"Pull away my hearty!" cried Peter.

"I do," replied Louis. "I'm in a froth of — Whish! Phoo! Haw! Pooh!"

"Oh! Botheration! My! What is it?" shouted Peter, in a half choked voice.

"Nothin' but a nice little duckin', my dear little boys," answered a squeaking voice from the window of the saloon. "Won't you call to-morrow and sit for your pictures?"

"I guess we sold ourselves instead of the picture man, this time," said Louis, as he and Peter ceased running at some distance from the saloon. "My! how wet I am, and phoo! I do believe that fellow threw dirty water on us. My jacket smells as strong as a chemist's shop."

"That saloon man is a regular old coon," replied Peter, wringing his jacket. "He must have been in the old machine when I knocked."

"I guess he had seen us, and 'smelled a mice,'" rejoined Louis.

Digitized by Google

Yes, the saloon man had seen them, and suspecting some mischief had quietly opened his window and prepared a pail of dirty water, which he had emptied directly upon their heads, while they were tugging at the whipple-trees. The water was strongly impregnated with the chemicals used in photographing, and the boys were not only wet, but, as Peter had said, they smelled as "strong as a chemist's shop."

As they walked homewards, Louis thought of his broken resolution, and of the evil plight into which this adventure with his friend had brought him. He thought also of his untouched lessons. Shame filled his breast, and after walking for some time in silence, he turned to Peter and said, —

"Pete, we are a couple of fools."

"Are we?"

"To be sure we are. Didn't we go in search of fun? And what have we gained but tired legs, and wet, stinking jackets! If we aren't fools, we have been on fools' errands."

Digitized by Google

"That's so," rejoined Peter, "but what do you propose to do about it?"

"Just this," rejoined Louis. "I shall stop fooling and begin studying."

"Bah! When you do that, Louis, water will run up hill."

"We'll see about that, Mr. Pete," said Louis, somewhat angrily. "I want you to understand that I've made a great resolution to be a scholar."

"Hah, hah, hah," laughed Peter; "a great resolution, hey? O Louis, Louis, you'll never do it. Your great resolution will go up like a rocket and down like a stick."

"I tell you it wont," said Louis, very sharply. "And what's more, I'm going to win one of the medals."

"When crows are white and doves black, Louis, you will win a medal, and not before," replied Peter, laughing.

"Get out!" cried Louis, spitefully. "You're

Digitized by Google

a dunce yourself, and you think I must be a dunce too. I'll show you what I can do. Good night!"

Without waiting for a reply, Louis ran down the street leading to his home. Ashamed to meet his mother, he went in by the back door, and hurried to his chamber, where the first object which met his eye after he had lighted his lamp, was his resolution with its false spelling.

The boy sighed, and said, "Ah, me! Shall I ever break that old Enchanter's chains?"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

LOUIS' FIRST SUCCESS.

THE tea-bell broke the current of Louis' thoughts, and compelled him, however reluctant, to go down stairs and face his father and mother.

Mr. Sinclair, after asking a blessing, had scarcely began eating, before he looked round, sniffed the air, looked perplexed, and finally addressing his wife, said, —

"Dear me! What a singular odor there is in this room! It smells like a chemist's store. What is it, my dear?"

"I really do not know," replied Mrs. Sinclair. "I noticed it myself, and was wondering what it could be."

Digitized by Google

Louis turned so very red that his father observed it, and said, rather sternly, —

"Do you know what it is, Louis?'

"I suppose I do, sir," replied he, with commendable truthfulness; and then he related his adventure with Peter, at the Photographer's saloon.

"Served you right, sir," remarked his father, smiling. "I have a great mind to send the owner of that saloon a dollar." Then putting on a grave look, he added, "The less you have to do with that Peter Clinton, the better."

"He is a good fellow at heart, pa," replied Louis, feeling anxious to apologize for his friend. "He means well."

"I don't care what he *means*. I judge him by what he *does*. He is a practical joker, and an idler. He will never be worth his salt to any one, unless he mends his ways."

"But pa" ——

"There is no *but* in the case, my son.

Digitized by Google

Peter Clinton is on the wrong track. You are easy, good-natured, readily lead into wrong paths. You must give up Peter Clinton as your friend, or give up all hope of ever becoming a real man."

"I do want to be a real man, pa," replied Louis; and then he told his father of his recent resolution, and how it had been broken.

"Just as I told your mother. The great enchanter, SELFISHNESS, has bound you in the two chains of *idleness* and *gluttony*. You must break his chains, or be either a nobody, or a pest of society as long as you live."

"Oh, pa!" exclaimed Louis.

"It is exactly as I say, my son. Your chains will destroy you, if you do not break them."

"Do you think I *can* break them?" inquired Louis, with eagerness.

"Of course you can, if you try."

"But I did try, father, and failed in the very beginning."

Digitized by Google

"That may be; but you must try again. Such chains as yours are not often broken with one blow. The next time you try, you must beware of a little elfin through whose aid your enchanter kept you in his power this afternoon."

"An elfin! what is that?"

"His name is 'by and by.' Sometimes he is called 'not now.' When you put off the study of your lesson this afternoon for the purpose of *writing* your resolution on paper, you was listening to this elfin's voice. Your old idleness shrank from a fair grappling with your lesson, and you gladly listened to the elfin's suggestion.

"That's so, father, but what can I do?"

"Do? Renew your resolution to study. Mark out your plan, and then stick to it. Do *all* that you resolve to do, and do it *when* you resolve to do it."

"I will, father," said Louis, firmly.

Digitized by Google

"Stick to that, my boy, and you'll win prizes in the race of life, just as others have done. There was WILLIAM PALEY, for example. When he went to college he was in some respects as you are. He had good parts, but he was idle. Everybody said he'd turn out a great man if he would only study. But he would not study. The Peter Clintons of his college kept him engaged in idle sports, or from his books, so that he wasted the first two years of his college life. But early one morning a classmate entered his chamber, and told him he was a fool for idling away his time, and wasting his opportunities. 'I could do nothing, probably, if I try,' said this good-natured scapegrace. 'But you have talents, and can do everything if you try. I am come to tell you, that I shall renounce your society, much as I love it, if you don't give yourself to your studies.' William listened, reflected, resolved to give his mind to study, kept his resolution,

Digitized by Google

won college honors, and became a dignitary in the church, a noted author, and a very useful man."

Louis listened with brightening eyes to this story of young Paley. He caught a portion of the spirit in which his father spoke, and said, —

"Pa, I will try to stick to my studies, and become a real man. I will, truly. I will go to my chamber right off, and get my grammar and spelling lessons for to-morrow, before I go to bed."

"That's right, my son. Declare open war, and war to the knife with your old enemy, the Great Enchanter; and remember, you must fight your battles as little David fought his with the giant in olden time, in the name of the Lord of Hosts."

Louis kissed his father and mother, and bidding them good-night, left the room in very high spirits. He bounded up stairs, two steps

Digitized by Google

at a time, and walked into his room with the firm step of one who already felt himself a conqueror. His eye rested on his written resolution, and he said to himself, —

"I guess I'll take that thing down."

Mounting a chair he quickly removed the card; then seating himself at the table, he began to examine the text in which his resolution was written.

"That's capital!" cried he, as he held the card to the light. "There isn't a boy in Lindendale who can beat that. Pity I didn't spell that word right. I guess I'll write it on a separate bit of card, and stick it over this blunder with mucilage. Then it will be something to be proud of."

Yielding to this impulse he began to search for a bit of card-board, when he heard the clock strike eight.

"Eight o'clock, eh?" said he. "Eight o'clock. Bah! Here am I, goose that I am,

Digitized by Google

listening to that elfin again. It won't do, Mr. By-and-by, or Not-now, or whatever your name is. The card must wait; I'm going to get my lessons in a style that will make the fellows stare. Come, Mr. Grammar, you've got to knuckle under to me to-night."

Louis, as I have already said, had excellent powers of mind. His perceptions were quick and clear. His verbal memory was very superior. You will not be surprised, therefore, when I tell you that after an hour of close application he rose from his chair, looked proudly upon his books, and exclaimed:

"There, I've conquered. I know every word of that spelling lesson, and I can parse every particle in that grammar exercise, and give all the rules too. Won't the fellows stare to-morrow, when they see me marching toward the head of my classes! I'll show 'em that Louis Sinclair is some pumpkins after all!"

With these feelings Louis went through the

Digitized by Google

form of saying his prayers, before getting into bed. With his lips he thanked God, but his heart was full of boyish vanity, pride, and ambition. You see he had forgotten to begin his battle in the name of the Lord of Hosts, as his father had advised him to do.

The next morning he arose in high spirits. With his retentive and ready memory, he felt sure of his lesson, and had none of those fears with which boys of feeble memories are often tormented. Hence, when he went down to breakfast, he could confidently say, as he did, —

"Pa, I've mastered my lessons."

"Good!" exclaimed Mr. Sinclair, who knew and appreciated his son's power. "Only go on as you have begun, and the world will one day hear of Louis Sinclair. I hope it will hear that he is one of its benefactors."

Mrs. Sinclair looked approvingly, almost proudly, on her son. The boy felt gratified,

Digitized by Google

and even rewarded, for the effort of the previous evening. "I guess," said he, in his heart, "that I shall go on in this new path."

When he arrived at the Academy grounds, his fine spirits were a little damped, by the greetings he received from his schoolmates.

"Good-morning, Mr. Big Resolution!" said Peter Clinton, bowing with an air of mock gravity.

"Good-morning, Mr. Medal Winner!" said Godfrey Warren, with an ill-natured sneer.

"Good-morning, Dux!" said Robert Warren, with a half-cynical laugh.

Louis knew from their greetings, that Peter had told the boys of his resolution to study, and to take at least one of the medals. So, without saying one word, he cast an angry look upon Peter, and walked proudly into the schoolroom, saying to himself, —

"I'll show them by and by, that I'm not the fool they take me to be."

Digitized by Google

And he kept his word; for before noon he had, by means of his perfect lessons, worked his way to the head of his spelling class, and to within one place of the top of his grammar class. His writing and behavior were also openly commended by his teacher.

The boys were surprised, and at the recess, more than one was heard to say, —

"Sid De Grey must look out for his laurels, if Louis Sinclair keeps on as he begun this morning."

But the great question to be settled was, will he keep on? Scarcely one of them believed he would. Peter Clinton expressed the general opinion, when he said, —

"I know Louis Sinclair; he is smart, but there is no 'hold on' in him."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

A CANDY SCRAPE.

"I MEAN to hold on though," was Louis' comment on Peter's remark.

"Louis, I am so glad, you did yourself justice this morning," said Sidney, taking Louis by the arm and walking with him to a retired part of the grove.

"There go the Socrates and Plato of Lindendale!" observed Godfrey Warren, with a sneer, to a crowd of boys, as he pointed toward the grove.

"Good for Godfrey." "Ha, ha." "What a joker you are, Godfrey!" and similar remarks from his companions rewarded Godfrey's sneer at his two associates.

Digitized by Google

Godfrey had a very envious disposition. He could not endure a rival. To see another boy excel, was like vinegar to his teeth. He hated Sidney for no other reason than his superior scholarship, and now, because Louis began to give promise of diligence, he hated him also. To gratify this bad feeling, he tried to make the boys about him laugh at Louis and Sidney, by nick-naming them. The attempt did not take, however, except for the moment, for nearly every boy in the Academy liked Louis for his genial, easy manners; while they respected Sidney for his talents and manliness. Peter Clinton, as you know, was as strongly attached to both as he was to any one, and although he laughed at Godfrey's speech was the first to resent it. Said he, —

"It won't do, Mr. Godfrey. We know you and those two fellows too well to join you in poking fun at them. Why, either of 'em is worth a dozen of you any day. You are a regular built Diogenes."

Digitized by Google

"That's so!" shouted several voices. "He is the Diogenes of the Lindendale Academy."

"Say that again and I'll thrash you within an inch of your life," replied Godfrey, shaking his fist at Peter.

"*That!*" cried Peter, stepping back and placing the tip of his thumb against the tip of his nose; which, by the way, was a very vulgar act.

Shouts of boyish laughter greeted this retort. Godfrey ground his teeth and made a dash at Peter, who, being agile as a squirrel, dodged the blow, and placing himself behind a tree shouted, —

"If I was two years older I'd give you fits, Mr. Godfrey. Everybody knows you are a coward. You never touch a fellow of your own age and size, but you're always ready to threaten us small fellows."

"That's so, Pete," responded several voices, very much to the chagrin of Godfrey, who

Digitized by Google

happily for all parties saw Mr. Mildman approaching and became, as was his habit among his superiors, as quiet in aspect as a lamb. The ringing of the bell for the afternoon session broke up the knot, and all parties returned to the schoolroom.

Reading by the whole school for one hour, was the first exercise for that afternoon. The scholars were ranged along three sides of a hollow square and read one after another, first from the Scriptures and then from the History of the United States. Louis had a fine voice and when he chose was a superior reader. He did his best on this occasion, and for the third time that day won the commendation of his teacher.

He was highly elated, and at the close of the reading hour went to his composition with an earnestness of purpose which brought all his powers into full play. His theme was the retreat of Washington from Fort Lee, condensed

Digitized by Google

and stated in his own words, from the histories found in the library of the Academy.

Mr. Mildman's method of teaching composition was by requiring abridgments of some standard history, instead of original compositions on selected subjects. Louis was a good penman, had a ready command of words, and a good imagination. You will not be surprised therefore, when you are told that to-day, being resolved to excel, he produced a paper of which Mr. Mildman said, —

"The penmanship of this composition is almost faultless. Judging from the cursory reading I have given it, I should think its style admirable, its statement of facts clear, and its arrangement excellent. Louis Sinclair again merits commendation. This is the result of *diligence*. Let him and all of you remember that DILIGENCE, not luck, is the mother of good fortune."

"Your honors have fallen upon you thick as leaves to-day," said Peter to Louis as they left the Academy that afternoon.

Digitized by Google

"Yes, and you were among the fellows who laughed at me because I said I was going to try. I've got a black mark against you for that, Mr. Pete."

"O, I didn't mean anything, Louis. I only did it for fun," rejoined Peter, sidling up to his friend and putting his arm round his waist.

Louis had a kind heart, and rarely cherished anger long against any one. So he did not resent Peter's familiarity, but listened attentively when he added, —

"We are going to have a candy scrape at our house to-night, Lou. Mattie has invited Nellie Warren and Clara De Grey, and I want you and Bob Warren to come too."

"Can't do it," replied Louis, with emphasis.

"Why not?"

"Because I can't."

"That's a girl's reason," said Peter, laughing, "Can't you give a better one?"

"Well, if I *must* tell why I can't, I s'pose I

Digitized by Google

must. I want to study my lessons for to-morrow. Is that a boy's reason?"

"Yes. I — s'pose — it is," drawled Peter, "but I say, Louis, I hope you aren't going to turn monk, just because you want to win those medals."

"Turn monk?" not I, Peter, but I do mean to turn student. I can be a scholar if I try, and I do mean to try."

This was well said, but Peter was not easily shaken off. He proceeded to picture the "lots of fun," the "jolly time," and the "nice molasses candy," the girls would make, in such an attractive style, that Louis finally yielded his purpose to study to his desire for a share in the "candy scrape." He did this, however, with a reservation which was hardly earnest though it might have been sincere. He said, —

"Well, Pete, I'll go, if you'll let me off about half past eight. You know I'm pretty quick at learning, and I guess I can get out my lessons in an hour."

Digitized by Google

"Good for you, Louis Sinclair," replied Peter, patting his friend on the shoulder. "Be sure you come early, directly after tea. Won't we have a jolly time?"

The boys separated, and Louis hurried home to tell his mother of the successes of the afternoon. Of course she heard him with pleasure, and encouraged him to persevere in the work so well begun. His father, to whom he repeated the story, and who knew and feared his weaknesses, cautioned him against over-confidence and warned him that his new course would tax his selfishness.

"My son," said he, "first steps in a good path are important, but old habits will make continuance therein irksome and even difficult. You will require patience in order to final success, and patience is a flower which does not grow in every boy's garden."

Louis winced and grew silent under this remark as he thought of his promise to go to

Digitized by Google

Peter's "candy scrape," after tea. "I wish I hadn't promised," thought he, "but I have, and a fellow must be as good as his word. I'll go and get back early."

Louis was wrong in this thought. A boy ought *not* to keep a wrong promise, for a pledge to do evil is better broken than kept. Louis' error was in making the promise. He would have done right not to keep it when he saw how it conflicted with his duty. But he was not fully aware of the strength of his desire to partake of the candy and to share in the expected fun at Peter's house. His love of nice eating, in other words, his gluttony, one of his old chains, was the tie which bound him to the candy scrape.

After tea Louis left the sitting-room under the plea of going to his chamber to study his lessons. This liberty should have been denied him, for being an only child, there was no reason why he should not have prepared his

Digitized by Google

lessons below stairs. It was an error on the part of his parents to permit a practice which afforded so much opportunity for going out unseen; but they did it, and to-night, after a hasty glance at his lessons, he slid quietly down the back stairs into the street and across the road to Peter Clinton's home.

Merry voices greeted him there. Mattie, Nellie, and Clara were busy in the kitchen preparing the molasses to be boiled down into candy. The boys soon joined them, and with many lively jokes, and much fun, they proceeded first to make and then to eat the candy.

Just before nine o'clock the conversation turned on school matters, when Clara De Grey looking merrily on Louis said, —

"By the way, Louis, I heard that you astonished the natives, to-day."

"Did you?" queried Louis, looking glum, the question having reminded him of his neglected lessons.

Digitized by Google

"Yes. I hear that you suddenly became the bright particular star of our much celebrated Lindendale Academy. Won't you please let some of your abundant light shine on our dark minds to-night?"

Louis, never quick at making pertinent replies, was confused by this merry banter. He felt that he was not very likely to be a star on the morrow. So he held his head low, refilled his mouth with candy, and said nothing.

"A dumb scholar, hey?" remarked Clara. "Well, I suppose his head is stuffed so full of knowledge, there isn't room at the door for any of it to get out. Ah, ah!"

"And if there was, his mouth is so full of candy he couldn't get it through his lips," added Robert Warren. A general "Hah, hah, hah," followed this remark.

Louis blushed, and stammered, felt vexed, and as a call for Miss Clara to go home was just then made at the door, he seized the oppor-

Digitized by Google

tunity to slip into the hall, take his cap and go home, merely saying, "good night all," as he went out.

It was no difficult matter for him to get in by the back door and up to his chamber unperceived by his parents, who usually spent their evenings reading in the library. Once in his room he began to reflect.

"Well," said he to himself, "I am a grand student, a mighty good fellow to stick to my resolution. If I had stayed at home I should have mastered my lessons by this time, and been all right for to-morrow. Never mind, I've had a good time anyhow. That candy was nice,"—here he smacked his lips as if tasting its sweetness over again, —"and I'll try to make up for lost time, by pitching into my lesson with a will."

But his will was not strong enough to bind him to his books at that late hour. He was wearied. His stomach was overloaded with

Digitized by Google

candy. His energies were exhausted, and in spite of his will, his body triumphed. He yawned, fell into a dose over his book, then started up and renewed the effort to read. But the letters swam before his eyes, and closing the volume he muttered, "It's no use, I'll try it in the morning," and tumbling into bed without even *saying* his prayers, he soon fell into a sound sleep.

But when the morning came, it found him still heavily asleep. Nor did he awake until roused by the first breakfast bell. Then, after rubbing his eyes, he looked sleepily about his chamber, as if trying to find out where he was. At last he became thoroughly awake, and recollection returned to him.

"Ah!" exclaimed he, "I know. That candy scrape cheated me out of my time last night, and made me break my resolution, and here I am in bed, with breakfast almost ready. I'm afraid it's all up with my lessons. Oh dear, what a ninny I am!"

Digitized by Google

Then Louis fell into a half dreamy state of mind which kept him in bed until the bell again rang, calling him to breakfast. That sound started him completely. He sprang from his bed, dressed and washed in the most hurried manner, ran down stairs and reached the breakfast table just as his father was rising from it.

"Ah, Louis!" exclaimed Mr. Sinclair, "at your old tricks again, eh? I'm afraid you won't succeed in winning a medal if you don't conquer your love of sleep. Remember, indolence is one of your chains. Good morning, my son."

"Good morning, sir," mumbled Louis, with averted face, but glad to escape being questioned as to his lessons. Nor was he sorry to hear his mother say that she had to "go in town that morning with pa, and that she must leave him to eat by himself."

The breakfast table was well supplied that morning with "slapjacks," of which Louis was

Digitized by Google

particularly fond. He ate them so voraciously and so freely, that when he rose from his chair he felt very uncomfortable. He had feasted like a glutton, and so was bound once more with the two chains of his great enchanter, Indolence and Gluttony. Alas, poor Louis!

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI.

SHAMMING SICKNESS.

"TO go or not to go? That's the question," said Louis, as he threw himself upon a sofa in the library. "If I go I can't say my lesson, and the fellows will laugh at me. If I don't go I shall make father mad, and mother will feel bad about it. Now if I was only a little sick, I could stay at home. To tell the truth I'm not very well; my head is like lead and my stomach isn't exactly right. I rather guess I am sick enough to stay at home to-day, and —I — guess — I — will."

Thus did Louis find, to his great vexation and guiltiness, that one false step leads to another,

Digitized by Google

and that the beginning of evil is like the letting in of water. He began wrong the evening before, by going to the candy scrape when he *ought* to have studied his lessons. That led him to his old habit of gluttony, which, in its turn, made him sleepy and indolent in the morning. This indolence prepared him to repeat his gluttony at breakfast. Thus he totally unfitted himself to maintain his newly-won standing at school. Guilty shame had then become the ally of his other evil habits, and it prompted the sham sickness, and the lie by which it must necessarily be followed. O, Louis, Louis, you have let the great Enchanter greatly strengthen his chains!

Louis having made this cowardly resolution to play the hypocrite, rung the bell, and, when the servant appeared, said, with mock weakness of voice, —

"Margaret, I am not well to-day and shall not go to school. If any one asks for me, say I'm sick and gone to sleep in the library."

Digitized by Google

"Yes sir," replied the girl, betraying by a knowing smile, the doubt she felt of the reality of a sickness which left a boy's face so plump and rosy as the one before her.

Louis paid no attention to the girl's smile, but covered himself with a travelling shawl, and went to sleep. When he awoke, it was nearly eleven o'clock.

"My!" he exclaimed, after looking at his watch, "what a long nap I've had! I feel better though, my head don't ache a bit. Guess I'll go out for a stroll."

He now proceeded to the garden at the back of his father's house, and while looking among the branches of an early pear-tree, for any stray pears which might have been left ungathered, he was hailed by a voice from across the fence:

"Hollo, Louis! what kept you from school this morning?"

"I'm sick," said Louis, placing his hand upon his forehead and trying to look miserable.

Digitized by Google

"That's just what ails me!" rejoined Peter, winking his eye. "I got excused at recess."

"What ails *you?*" inquired Louis.

"Well, old fellow," said Peter, winking his eye again, "to tell the truth, I've got the school complaint. I told Mr. Mildman I had a pain in my stomach, which *was* the fact, though it isn't so just now. I expect the fresh air cured it, but nothing will cure my school complaint."

"School complaint! what's that, Pete?"

"Well, I can't exactly define it, because, you see, its meaning isn't given in the dictionary. But it's a complaint that makes a fellow hate books as hard as a mad dog does water. I expect you know something about it, old boy, eh?"

Louis laughed, though a twinge in his heart, caused by a thought of his broken resolution, made a sigh follow his laugh. After a moment or two of silence he replied, —

"Yes, I know something about it, Pete, though I'm not exactly like you, for you don't

Digitized by Google

love books at all. I do when I fairly get hold of one."

"That may be, Lou, but you are as loth to take hold of one as a dog is to bite at a hedgehog. I guess you and I don't differ much after all. But jump over the fence and come with me!"

Louis climbed over the fence and then they both strolled toward the fields and woods at the back of the village.

"Suppose we see if the wild grapes are ripe yet?" said Peter, when they came in sight of the woods.

"Get out with your nonsense!" exclaimed Louis, calling to mind Peter's practical joke of a day or two before. "You can't come that game over me again."

"Honor bright, now, and no joking!" said Peter. "It is about time for the grapes to ripen. You know that as well as I. There's that old vine down by the hickory grove, I

Digitized by Google

shouldn't wonder if it had grapes on it fit to pick."

"Here goes, then," rejoined Louis.

They now walked slowly over two or three pastures studded with cedars, until they reached a brook which was usually so low that it could easily be crossed on some stepping-stones. But to-day it was much swollen, owing to a very heavy shower which had fallen the preceding night. The water was three feet deep, and rushed angrily over the stepping-stones.

Peter picked up a pole, and rolling up his pants, was about to pick his way through the noisy little current, on the stones; but Louis stopped him, and said, —

"Look here, Pete, I'll show you how to cross a brook!"

"You show *me*? Bah! I guess I can beat you at that business any time," retorted Peter.

"I guess you can't," rejoined Louis. "Just wait a minute and see how I do it."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CROSSING THE BROOK. Page 77.

Digitized by Google

He then stepped upon an old log on the bank of the brook, and grasping the drooping branch of a willow-tree which grew on the opposite bank, prepared to swing himself across. He pulled the branch as far toward himself as possible, and then leaped forward, shouting in boastful tones,

"This is the way to cross a" —

Alas for Louis and his boasting! The branch was broken at the joint, and his weight tore it from the tree. So, instead of swinging across, he fell with a tremendous splash into the water.

Peter burst into a fit of laughter so uncontrollable, that he almost fell from the stone on which he stood. As soon as he could speak he cried, —

"I say, Lou, you had better take out a patent for your new way of crossing brooks."

But Louis was not prepared to enjoy his friend's joke. Fortunately, in falling, he had managed to keep his feet down, and though he

Digitized by Google

had not gained a standing position, he had a sitting one. There he was, then, seated in the brook, with the water almost up to his chin, supporting himself with one hand, while he stretched the other upwards and held a glittering object as high as his head.

Seeing him so still, Peter went to the edge of the brook as near to him as possible, and asked, —

Louis, you are in a rather wet place, why don't you come out of it? What's that in your hand?"

"My watch, can't you take it from me?"

It seemed that as Louis fell, he had thought of his watch, and that with rare presence of mind he had pulled it from his pocket while falling and held it above the water. Peter after replying, "I'll try," to his friend's request, waded knee deep into the water, and hooking the pole to the watch-guard brought it safely ashore. Louis, relieved of his anxiety about his

Digitized by Google

watch, quickly scrambled out of the brook and shook the water from his person.

Peter, with all his fun, was not without some thoughtfulness, and fearing lest Louis' wetting, on a cool autumnal morning, might injure his health, urged him to hurry home and change his clothes.

"No, I'll sit in the sun awhile and dry myself," replied Louis, doggedly.

"You musn't do any such thing. You'll take a mortal cold if you do."

"That's my business," said Louis, tartly.

"But you'll find it a very serious business if you don't make haste home."

"Well, it's all your fault, Mr. Pete," retorted Louis.

"Is it? Well, I'm sorry, though I don't see it. But mind, Mr. Louis, if you stay here and get cold and die, that'll be your own fault and not mine. Mind! I want you to go home."

Digitized by Google

Peter's earnestness, combined with a chill which crept over him, roused Louis' fears, and rising from the stump he had chosen for his seat, he walked toward his home. Peter went with him and tried to rally him, and get him into his usual merry mood. But he utterly failed, for what with his sense of shame, his feeling of guilt, his wet, uncomfortable clothing, his spirits would not rise. Indeed, he was so cross in his replies, that even Peter's good nature was insufficient to endure him, and he said, —

"Louis, you're a snapping turtle to-day, and I'll leave you until you recover your lost good temper."

"I don't care. You may go to Texas if you like."

"O very well, Mr. President of the Patent Brook Crossing Company," rejoined Peter, with a provoking laugh.

"Say that again and I'll throw this stone at your head," cried Louis, greatly excited, and

Digitized by Google

picking up a big stone which lay near his feet. A fit of passion rarely stirred his breast, for Louis, was far from being an ill-tempered or passionate boy. But his ducking and the succeeding chill had made him nervous. For once in his life, therefore, he was in a towering passion. Peter was surprised, and yet supposing he was only "pretending to be mad," as he afterwards remarked, he continued to tease him. In a taunting tone he said, —

"I shall say what I please, but I don't think I shall take any stock in your company, Mr. Sinclair. I don't believe in your way of crossing brooks. I'd rather go *over* than *through* a stream."

"Take that, you confounded goose!" shouted Louis, throwing the stone violently at his companion.

"Oh, oh, oh, my head! Oh dear!" cried Peter, placing his hands upon the lower part of his forehead, and sinking to the ground.

Digitized by Google

The stone had struck him between his eyes, and on the upper part of his nose. The blood gushed from his nose. He was partially stunned. His face grew very white, and the matter looked very serious to Louis, whose alarm speedily subdued his temper. Kneeling down beside his companion he said, in very beseeching tones,

"Here Peter, take my handkerchief, open your eyes there's a good fellow, do! Please do, Peter!"

"Oh, oh, oh!" groaned Peter.

"Are you much hurt, Pete? I didn't mean to hurt you Pete. Poor fellow! I'm so sorry. What shall I do? What shall I do?" moaned Louis, as he continued to wipe the blood which flowed from Peter's nose.

"Help me up and lead me home," said Peter a few minutes later, when his nose had ceased bleeding.

"Can't you see?" asked Louis, trying to remove his friend's hands from his eyes.

Digitized by Google

"I don't know. Oh! Lead me home!" replied Peter, refusing to remove his hands.

This affair had taken place in the road running from the fields to the village street, and Louis, taking Peter by the shoulder, began to guide him homewards. They had not proceeded a rod before the town clock struck twelve, and almost immediately after, the boys and girls came trooping from the Academy buildings, both of which were in sight from where they stood.

In an instant Louis thought of the exposure which would follow if they should be seen by the boys in their present plight. The clock also reminded Peter that he had pleaded sickness in order to get excused at recess, and that, therefore, he must keep out of sight if possible. Hence, he was not sorry to hear Louis say,

"Pete, school's out, and we must lie low until the fellows and girls get out of sight. Let me lead you into the old barn yonder."

"All right!" replied Peter, removing his

Digitized by Google

hands and trying to open his eyes. This he was able to do, and then placing one hand on his forehead, and saying, "My head aches terribly," he went with Louis into the barn.

There Louis examined his bruise, which was pretty severe. The skin was broken just over the bridge of his nose, the forehead was black and puffed up, and there was too much reason to suppose that he would have two black eyes. Louis expressed much sorrow for having thrown the stone. Peter readily forgave him, for his heart, with all its faults, never bore malice, or cherished hatred. But though these boys could forgive each other, they could not forgive themselves, and as they parted, after staying a few minutes in their hiding-place, Peter said, —

"Hang it, Louis, I wish I hadn't shammed sick this morning."

Louis sighed as he replied, "And I wish I had stuck to my resolution. If I had I shouldn't have looked like a drowned rat as I do now.

Digitized by Google

I shouldn't have bunged your eyes half out either, and I should have felt better every way."

"So should I, Louis, if I had remained in school. I believe I wont try to pull wool over teacher's eyes any more. It don't pay, at least it don't pay in the kind of coin a fellow likes to carry."

Then the two boys went home, each bearing his own burden of guilt, shame and misery.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

A FRESH START.

LOUIS sneaked into the house, more like a thief than a son. His mother had not yet returned from her trip to the city, and so he passed unobserved into his chamber. Having been so long in wet clothes, and the day being somewhat cool, he was shivcring with cold. Not knowing what better to do, he went to bed, hoping to get warm while his clothes dried in the bright sun-shine which poured in through his bedroom window.

Poor Louis! He had indulged his wrong tendencies, and now he was paying the penalty. His mind and body were both in an evil plight. A fever was coming on in the latter, and con-

Digitized by Google

science was busy in the former. He tried to sleep, but his brain seemed to dash about his skull like waves, and he could not keep his eyes closed. After much tossing and sighing, he said, half aloud, —

"Louis Sinclair, what a stupid greenhorn you have been! Why didn't you stick to your resolution? Because you couldn't; you haven't the stuff in you that grows into real manhood. You are a regular built soft-cake, that's what you are."

The boy talked to himself in this strain a long time, until he grew quite feverish, and very much discouraged. Then his thoughts ran upon the pretence of sickness he had made in the morning, and he talked aloud, again, somewhat after this fashion:

"I was a coward for not facing the music this morning, and going to school. I was mean and wicked when I pretended to be sick. O, dear, how hard it is for a fellow like me to

Digitized by Google

do right; I do wish I was like Sid De Grey. It seems natural to him to do right."

Just then Mrs. Sinclair, who had now returned from the city, entered his room, looking quite alarmed. Seating herself by the bedside, she smoothed his hair and said, —

"My dear boy, what is the matter? The servant says you have been sick all the morning."

At that moment her eye rested on the wet clothes spread out before the window to dry, and with still greater earnestness, she said, —

"What does all this mean?"

"It means," replied Louis, resolving to make a clean breast of it, "that I have been a weak, wicked boy."

"But these wet clothes, my son?"

Louis then told the whole story, beginning with the invitation to the candy scrape the previous evening, and ending with his assault upon his friend Peter. Looking eagerly into his mother's eye he finally asked, —

Digitized by Google

"Do you think there is any hope for such a fellow as I am?"

"You certainly lack firmness, my son," replied his mother, "but I don't think you need to despair. A Tartar chief once saw an ant fail sixty-nine times in its effort to roll a grain of wheat into its hill, but it succeeded on the seventieth trial. The desponding chief took heart from the ant's example and became a mighty conqueror. You may do the same, if you will, and become a greater conqueror than the Tartar."

"How so, ma? I'm not a soldier."

"He conquered cities, you may conquer yourself, my son. He was an earthly soldier. You may be a spiritual warrior. But you are too sick to talk now. You must be quiet and I will try to get you well again."

A warm bath, some medicated drink, and perfect quiet, finally enabled Louis to get into a deep sleep which lasted far into the night.

Digitized by Google

Nature triumphed over the threatening fever and the next morning when he awoke, he was almost well again. His mother congratulated him and said, —

"Keep quiet to-day, my dear, and by to-morrow you will be able to go to school."

These words reminded Louis of his broken resolution, and, in his heart, he resolved to make another trial, for at least one medal. He was about to tell his mother so, but shame kept him silent, and he contented himself with frequently repeating to himself the following words, —

"I'll try, at least, as many times as the ant did for his grain."

During the quiet hours of that morning, Louis worked diligently at his lessons, and before noon he had completed a "composition," mastered his grammar, and worked out his problems in arithmetic.

"How nice a fellow feels, when his work is done!" said he to himself as he sat in the library after dinner.

Digitized by Google

He was right. A sense of duty done is always pleasant. It is one of the rewards of virtue.

Early in the afternoon, Peter Clinton came in. As he entered the library, Louis greeted him cheerfully, saying, —

"Glad to see you, old fellow! How are your eyes?"

"Not very bad, as you can see, Louis. Mother put some raw beef on my eyes and plastered my nob with vinegar and brown paper, according to the recipe in the famous story of Jack and Gill. Except a little cut, which you see is covered with arnica plaster, I shall be all right to-morrow."

"I'm glad, Pete, I didn't hurt you any worse. I was sorry the moment the stone left my hand, and I've been sorry ever since. I don't know how I came to do it."

"You were as mad as a hornet, Lou. That's why."

Digitized by Google

"That's so, but then, Pete, you did tease a fellow terribly."

"Well, I s'pose I did, but I never saw you kick at a joke like that before. I didn't know you had so much spunk in you."

Louis laughed and replied. "To tell the truth I didn't know it myself. I don't think I ever was in a real passion before. It was because I was cold, I guess."

"Shouldn't wonder if that was it," rejoined Peter, "but let that pass. We are friends again, and I've come in to see if you will ride with me down to Uncle Joe's farm after some butter."

"I guess I will, and glad of the chance. A ride will do me good. Besides, I want to say a word to Uncle Joe."

"Come along, then! We'll start from my house."

Louis told his mother where he was going. She did not object, thinking perhaps that a

Digitized by Google

short ride would be rather beneficial to him than otherwise, though she did wish it was to be taken with a more promising companion than Peter. In a few minutes both boys were in Mr. Clinton's stable. The hired man was out, and could not be found.

"Never mind, I'll harness up," said Peter, taking down a bridle.

The horse was soon harnessed to the buggy. The boys got in, Peter taking the reins. They had not reached the gate before Louis exclaimed, —

"My! Pete, how lame your horse is, to-day."

"Lame as a wounded soldier, sure enough," replied Peter, crying, "whoa," and adding, "What can ail the critter?"

"She has a cut in her thigh, see how it bleeds!" said Louis, pointing to a bad wound in one of the beast's hind legs.

"I wonder how that came?" queried Peter. "We must go back."

Digitized by Google

They took the horse from the buggy, and led him back to the stable. Looking about for the cause of the wound, they found a sharp-tined dung fork lying on the floor, in the rear of the stall. It had been hanging behind the horse, and as it seemed, the poor creature, while rubbing itself, had pushed against the fork so as to get one of the tines into its thigh. In its endeavors to be rid of the painful annoyance it had finally thrown the fork to the ground.

The hired man coming in, the boys told him the story, and urged him to doctor the poor horse at once. "And," said Peter, "I'll put Whitefeet into the buggy."

"Indade, ye had better not do that, Master Peter," replied the man.

"Why not, Patrick?"

"And sure isn't the baste too much for the likes of you to drive? Didn't he run away wid your pa, last summer?"

Peter laughed at the man's fears, and so did

Digitized by Google

Louis. "Why," said the latter, with a boastful air, "there isn't a horse in Lindendale that I can't drive."

"I'll bet a dime, Patrick, that I can drive as well as you, any day," added Peter, "and I'm going to take Whitefeet. If he runs, let him, I'm not afraid."

"And sure it's yerself 'll be sorry, young gentlemen, if yer take Whitefeet. He's too much of a horse for such as you to manage, if he happens to get his spirit up."

"We'll spirit him," said Louis, as he proceeded to help Peter put the harness on Whitefeet.

Patrick ought to have been more decided with these foolish boys, but being an easy fellow, and knowing that Peter did pretty much as he pleased, he permitted them to drive off with the spirited animal, named Whitefeet.

"Don't he step grandly!" exclaimed Louis, as they bowled along the road leading to Uncle Joe's farm.

Digitized by Google

"Splendid!" replied Peter. "He's a noble fellow. As to his running away it's all bosh. Our Pat was trying to frighten us."

The self-confident boys talked on in this vein until they reached Uncle Joe's farm. Having tied Whitefeet, they went into the house. Clara met them as they entered the sitting-room, and gave them a pleasant, not to say merry greeting. After a little while she said to Louis:

"I understand that you mean to take all the medals at your Academy, that is, I suppose, if you can."

Louis blushed, for these words stung him sharply. He replied, in a somewhat bungling manner, —

"Yes — no — that is, I think I shall try for one."

"How remarkably clear-headed you are this afternoon," retorted Clara, laughing.

"And you are remarkably polite," said Uncle Joe, smiling, as he entered the room.

Digitized by Google

"Of course, papa, how can I help being polite to such polished young gentlemen," replied Clara, with the merriest of little laughs.

After a few more words of pleasantry, Peter left the room with Clara to see Mrs. De Grey about buying some butter. When Louis found himself alone with Uncle Joe, he felt awkward, for he recollected what had been said at the picnic a few weeks before. But the old gentleman's kind manner soon reassured him, and to his own surprise he found himself telling the story of his broken resolution, from beginning to end, to Uncle Joe.

"I am delighted," said the good man smiling.

"What for, sir?" asked Louis, in great surprise. "Are you glad that I failed?"

"I don't think you have failed yet, my dear boy," replied the kind old gentleman, in his gentlest manner, "and if I do not mistake you very much, you do not intend to fail. You are a soldier fighting a battle with a mighty

Digitized by Google

enchanter, as your father told you, and you will never fail so long as you keep fighting. When you were at my picnic, you were not a soldier but a slave. You let your enchanter govern you, and you gloried in the chains with which he bound you. Your *wish* was, 'Plenty to eat and nothing to do!' Now, your wish is to be a student, a scholar and to grow into a true man. My boy, you have grown.. Keep on and you will, by and by, be a man of whom your mother will not be ashamed. But Louis," and here the old man's voice was solemn, and his look heavenly, "*You must fight this battle in the strength of the Great King.*"

"Come, Louis! I'm ready to start," cried Peter, pushing his head in at the door, at this very inopportune moment.

He rose to go, and though he only said, "good-by," to Uncle Joe, yet his looks told the old gentleman that a deep impression had been made upon the boy's mind.

Digitized by Google

"You are glum," remarked Peter, as they started on their ride home.

"I like Uncle Joe," was Louis' only reply.

"I guess we will drive over, and round the hill, instead of going straight home," observed Peter, turning Whitefeet into a road which ran over a pretty steep hill.

"Did you ever see a horse go up a hill like this?" queried Peter a minute later.

"I believe he's running away!" exclaimed Louis, looking a little frightened.

"I guess — he is, I declare — whoa! steady Whitefeet! whoa! whoa!" shouted Peter.

But Whitefeet's blood was up and he had the bits between his teeth. Running away was an old trick with him. His pace was terrible for he was a swift, and powerful horse. He cared for neither bits nor words, and swept along the road with terrific speed. The boys said nothing. They looked very pale, however, though, like sensible boys they did not attempt to get

Digitized by Google

out of the buggy, but clung resolutely to the seat. Meanwhile, the horse tore on, mile after mile until, after running three miles, he reached a lane which led to Mr. Clinton's house. Making a short turn to enter this lane, the mad creature trod on a pebble and fell. The buggy was turned over, and the boys fell plump into a mud puddle. Patrick happened to see the "spill" and ran to their assistance. He found the horse so entangled in the harness he could not stir; the buggy very little broken, and the boys well shaken, but not hurt. After getting the horse up, he said, —

"This comes of havin' your own way, Master Peter."

"It isn't as bad as it might be, old fellow," replied Peter, as he scraped the mud from his pants, with a chip. "We might have killed the horse, smashed the buggy, or broken our own necks. But I think you ought to bear part of the blame, Pat."

Digitized by Google

WHITEFEET RUNNING AWAY. Page 101.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WHITEFEET RUNNING AWAY. Page 100.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"And sure it's not meself that's in fault a bit, Master Peter; didn't I tell yer ye couldn't drive the baste? How can yer blame me, sur?"

"Because you ought to have broken White-feet of his tricks," replied Peter, laughing.

"I tell you what, Pete," said Louis, "I begin to think it isn't best for us fellows to have our own way. It always brings us into trouble."

Louis was right. Self-will and self-pleasing are a boy's worst enemies. "A boy left to *himself* bringeth his mother to shame."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

SUCCESS AND ITS TRIALS.

THE next morning found Louis at school again in high spirits. A note from his mother to the teacher, asking that he might be excused for his late absence, saved him from censure on that account, while his own frankness, procured him the good will of Mr. Mildman. When that gentleman had read the note, he looked with a very significant glance at Louis, while he refolded it and said, —

"Very well, sir. Take your seat!"

"If you please, sir, may I speak?" asked Louis, with a modest air and eyes partially downcast.

"Certainly, certainly, Master Sinclair, speak on?" replied the teacher very kindly.

Digitized by Google

"I wanted to say, sir, that I stayed away from school the first day because I had not learned my lessons. I shammed sickness, and so got into a scrape with Peter Clinton, which made me really sick. I'm sorry, sir. But I mean to do better in future and to study my lessons."

As Louis finished this confession, he looked into the teacher's face and saw tears standing in his soft, expressive eyes. The sight subdued his heart, and it glowed with the warmth of a new born love for the good man. And out of that love there sprang a strong purpose which expressed itself in these words, silently whispered in the inner chamber of his soul, — "I will never grieve this man again."

This loving purpose struck still deeper root when Mr. Mildman replied in his softest tones,

"I'm glad to hear you say so, my son. I have faith in you, and believe you will do as you say. You may take your seat!"

Louis went to his desk with new feelings in

Digitized by Google

his breast. The love he now felt for his teacher, the encouragement contained in Mr. Mildman's words, and his own purpose to become a vigorous student, made him feel as if new forces had been created in his soul. His mind was active. Instead of a task, as heretofore, the study of his lessons was a pleasure, and when he went up to recite, he excelled in all his lessons.

It was the habit of Mr. Mildman to write the "copy" for the writing classes on the blackboard, instead of in the copy-books, as is usual in many schools. On this morning he wrote, in beautiful round hand, this significant proverb:

"THE RACE IS WON BY RUNNING."

"That's for me," thought Louis. "I have not tried very hard to win the race at all, and when I have tried it has been by leaps. Now I will run steadily and see if I can't stand among the first students in this school."

Digitized by Google

When Louis' grammar class went up to recite, the teacher selected the fable of the Hare and Tortoise, as the subject for a parsing exercise.

"That means me, again," said Louis to himself. "I'm the hare of my class. Sometimes I have studied and gone ahead, and then I haven't studied, and such slow coaches as Clinton, Bob Godfrey, and lately even that thick-headed Ned Wallace have beat me hollow. But that's all over now. They can't come the tortoise game over me any more; or, rather, I won't play hare to them any longer. I'm bound to keep running in the race for scholarship until I win. Hurrah for me!"

Louis was so earnest in this monologue that he almost forgot where he was, and uttered the last joyous exclamation in so loud a voice that it was heard half over the school. The boys looked at him and laughed, the teacher smiled and tapped his call-bell. Louis held down his

Digitized by Google

head in momentary confusion, but as he was conscious of no intention to disturb the order of the school, he soon recovered his self-possession and gave his attention to his lesson.

At the noon recess, Sidney De Grey and Robert Warren gave Louis their very cordial praise. Some of the boys in his class were jealous of him and gave him what is called the "cold shoulder;" that is, they treated him coolly.

"Never mind!" said Sidney, after Louis had spoken of the evident coldness of some of his classmates, "Never mind, Louis. They hurt themselves more than they do you. My father often tells me that I must expect to be envied by other boys if I do better than they do. But he says, 'Envy shoots at others and wounds herself,' and therefore, I should not try to hurt, but pity those who envy me. I suppose this advice is as good for you as it is for me."

Digitized by Google

"I s'pose it is," replied Louis, thoughtfully.

"What makes you look so grave all at once?" asked Robert.

"I was thinking," rejoined Louis, "that if I was only sure of keeping on, I should not care who envies me; but I am a slave."

"A slave!" exclaimed his companions, as with one voice, "what do you mean, Louis?"

"I am the slave of a mighty enchanter, and he holds me fast with two stout chains, so that I can't get away from him."

"You are funning," said Robert.

"No he isn't," replied Sidney, who thought he saw a seriousness in his friend's manner which implied that his strange words had a deeper meaning than either Robert or himself could fully perceive.

"You are right, Sid, as you always are. I am in earnest. I am truly a slave, trying to run away from a mighty enchanter;" and then Louis went on to tell, what the reader knows,

Digitized by Google

how his father had called his *Selfishness* an enchanter, and his *gluttony* and *indolence* two chains. He closed by saying, "I would give a million of dollars if I had them, to be sure that I shall break those chains and escape from the grip of that enchanter."

Never had his two friends seen Louis look so earnest and manly as when he said these words. Heretofore his eyes had been dull, his steps slow, and his form heavy, almost squabby, but now there was a light in his eyes, a vigor in his movements, and an elevation in his body which made him look like another boy. His thorough earnestness had caused this change. His mind had, what it never had before, a living purpose and that had made the outward change which made his two friends wonder as they looked upon him.

Sidney was delighted with Louis' manner, and entered more fully than Robert could into his feelings. Replying to his last words, he said, —

Digitized by Google

"Louis, there is no doubt but that you *can* break your chains and get away from your enchanter."

"I wish I felt sure of that," replied the boy, sighing as the thought of his old habits rushed into his mind.

"You may, Louis," rejoined Sidney, very seriously. "There is One greater and mightier than your enchanter, who stands ready to break your chains and set you free. He can change your selfishness into love, and instead of leaving you a slave to gluttony and idleness, he can make you a temperate, industrious boy. Do you remember the text at church last Sunday?"

"I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me," replied Louis.

"That's what Uncle Joe calls a golden text for us boys," rejoined Sidney. "He says that the *best* boy *can't* do his duties without the help of Christ, and that with it the *worst* one *can* conquer himself and do right."

Digitized by Google

Before Louis had time to answer, the attention of the three thoughtful lads was called to another part of the playground by loud and discordant cries of, "O, dear!" "Let me alone!" "Hit him back, Pete!" "A fight, a fight!" "Make a ring — do!"

Of course, they ran to see from whence these cries proceeded. Approaching the crowd of excited boys, they found Peter Clinton and Godfrey Warren in the middle rolling up their sleeves and preparing to fight. Both of them appeared to be greatly excited, and Peter's bruised face showed that he had already felt the force of Godfrey's blows.

"Shame on you, you big Godfrey Warren, for fighting a little fellow like Peter!" cried Louis as soon as he reached the contesting parties.

"Mind your own business!" growled Godfrey with a scowl.

"Don't fight, Peter, there's a good fellow,"

Digitized by Google

pleaded Sidney, addressing the other combatant. "It's wrong to fight."

"You clear out, you psalm-singing snipe, or I'll give *you* a dressing down," growled Godfrey again, as he shook his fist in Sidney's face.

"My! what a bruiser Godfrey is!" exclaimed one of the small boys. "Guess he'll give us all a whipping by and by."

"He's only a brag," replied another boy. "Just wait till they get at it, and you'll see little Peter beat him to a jelly."

"Come on! Come on!" cried Godfrey to Peter, pushing aside his seconds, and putting himself into a fighting attitude.

It was a disgusting spectacle. Two bare-headed boys with their coats and vests off, their shirt sleeves rolled up, their faces pale with passion, and their eyes glaring with the fires of anger, hatred, and revenge, preparing to rush at each other with the fury of wild beasts. No wonder that the gentle Sidney turned away

Digitized by Google

and wept; that Robert begged his brother to "let Pete Clinton alone," and that Louis loudly affirmed, "if big Godfrey wasn't a coward, he wouldn't touch a boy two years younger than himself and not much more than half his size."

How this unequal battle would have ended, I cannot say, because, although Godfrey had the advantage in size, weight, and age, yet Peter was quick on his feet, pretty tough and knotty, and quite as plucky as his opponent. But, happily for all parties, the battle was never fought. Cries of, "Teacher's coming! Teacher's coming!" made the combatants drop their fighting attitudes, and stand with bowed heads in presence of Mr. Mildman, who now came quickly up to the scene of the fight. Looking at the two boys with a frown, he asked sternly:

"What does this mean?"

No one replied.

Again the teacher asked, "What does all this mean?"

Digitized by Google

"Please, sir, Peter painted Godfrey's back, and then Godfrey licked him," replied one of the small boys.

"Put on your clothes, and come into the Academy directly," said the teacher, addressing the two combatants.

Very sulkily the boys obeyed, and walked into the schoolhouse, followed by all the other pupils.

After some time the teacher ascertained that the disgraceful scene had been brought on by one of Peter's idle tricks. It appeared that he had cut out a figure of Punch in cardboard, and having covered one side of it with chalk, had secretly held it against Godfrey's back so as to leave an impression of the grotesque figure in white on the boy's jacket. Of course, when Godfrey walked out upon the playground, he was saluted with loud laughter from all sides. This roused his temper, and as he did not know the cause of the laughing, he made himself look very ridiculous by walking about and threaten-

Digitized by Google

ing to give all the laughers a good thrashing, while the boys only walked after him, pointing at the image of Punch, and laughing louder than ever.

At last, one boy shouted, "Look at your jacket!"

Perplexed as to this boy's meaning, Godfrey looked at the breasts, arms, and shoulders of his jacket, provoking still more boisterous laughter by his vain efforts to discover the cause of their fun, and getting increasingly furious every moment. At length another boy shouted:

"Look at your back! Look at your back!"

Godfrey had then discovered the cause of all this ado, and, instead of taking the matter pleasantly, had yielded to his ill temper, charged the affair on Peter, and challenged him to a fight. Having learned these facts, the teacher gravely rebuked Peter for marking Godfrey's back, gave both boys some very touching and valuable counsel, and then sentenced them to a

Digitized by Google

very singular punishment. They were to remove their jackets and vests, roll up their shirt sleeves, and stand for one hour on a platform before the whole school in a fighting attitude!

This sentence was put in force the first hour of the afternoon session. It seemed ludicrous, at first, but before the hour expired, the culprits found it extremely painful and mortifying. It made them heartily ashamed, both of themselves and of their conduct, and it had a good effect on the school. One boy expressed the general opinion, at the close of the session, when he said, —

"I would rather be called a coward a thousand times, for not fighting, than to stand squaring up to another fellow like a fool, for an hour, as those fellows did this afternoon."

As Sidney parted with Louis that evening at the gate of his home, he said, —

"Louis, if we cannot persuade Peter to give up his tricks and become a student, you and I must leave off playing with him."

Digitized by Google

"That's so," Louis replied. "We must reform or cut him."

"I go in for his reformation," rejoined Sidney.

"So do I. Good-by, Sid."

"Good evening!" returned Sidney waving his hand and walking toward his father's house. Louis went into his home with a very thoughtful air.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

A CORN ROASTING PARTY.

"MOTHER! I beat everybody to-day," said Louis, in a very jubilant tone, as he entered the dining-room.

"I am glad you excelled, my son," replied Mrs. Sinclair, looking affectionately upon her boy, "because that proves your diligence. But I do not care to see you excel merely for the sake of excelling."

"You don't, mother! Why not?"

"Because, my dear, the mere fact of your being at the head of your classes will do you little good. You are to be benefited by the mental activity and knowledge which place you there. The boys below you in the classes may

Digitized by Google

be above you in real excellence. Your natural powers may enable you to surpass them in their lessons, and yet their harder toil and steadier perseverance may cause them to derive more real profit from their studies."

Louis' quick perception enabled him to perceive the truth of his mother's remark. He went to the library with a face which wore a graver aspect than when he entered the house. Throwing himself into an easy chair he stretched himself at full length and began thinking.

I cannot tell you all his thoughts because he never told them all to me, but you may guess their character from the following monologue with which he closed his reverie:

"Yes," said he, half aloud, "I can excel and I will. I will have one, if not two, of those silver medals. There isn't a fellow in my class who has the ghost of a chance if I try, except Sid De Grey. I don't know but I could beat him if I tried very hard, though I don't know.

Digitized by Google

He's better posted than I am in our old studies, and will shine bright on review days. Maybe he'll get the medal for 'general excellence,' but I can beat him in 'composition,' anyhow. And I'm not bad at keeping the rules. I'm a pretty orderly fellow if I am a little lazy. Well, I'll put in hard. Mother wants me to, and father will be mighty proud of me if I win a medal. If I'm not mistaken, teacher would like to have me win too. He's a grand fellow. I like him first rate."

At this point, Louis raised his right foot to the edge of the writing table. It moved under the pressure, and losing his balance he slipped in his chair. In rising, his eye rested on a paper-covered book which he had pushed under the broad central foot of the table for concealment, a few days before. He picked it up, looked at it a moment, and then began to read. When the bell rang for tea, he was so deeply engaged with it that he did not hear the bell until it rang

Digitized by Google

a second time. Then starting up, he pushed his book beneath the broad table leg, and pettishly exclaiming, "botheration!" went into the dining-room.

What was the book which had so strongly seized upon the attention of Louis? It was a cheap novel, one of those bad books which have been printed so freely of late years and which, being very cheap, are too readily obtained, and too greedily read by too many boys. Louis had long been in the habit of reading these books, although his parents had frequently warned him of their evil influence.

Poor Louis! He had, as you can see, let a good many enemies into his heart. He had many advantages and helps, enough to enable him to become both a Christian and scholarly boy. But he had also many hinderances in the form of old evil habits, which he had made strong by the favor he had shown them. That he now meant to battle with them earnestly and sin-

Digitized by Google

cerely, there can be no doubt. Still, as you see, he was not as yet very successful. Why not? Because he had not yet properly learned the lesson to which Sidney had referred in the playground. He had yet to learn, that the strength by which a boy or girl wins victories in the battle with self, is that which our Father in heaven gives to those who ask for it, and *to those only*.

Louis had sought help from his human friends, but he was not asking for that divine strength, and you will not therefore, be surprised to learn that as soon as tea was over, instead of going to his lessons for the next day, he returned to the library and resumed the reading of his yellow-covered novel.

In doing this he was guilty of deceit, for to conceal what he was doing from his parents, he placed his novel within the leaves of his grammar. When his father entered the library and saw him so busy, he said,

Digitized by Google

"Hard at work, eh, boy?"

"Yes sir."

"What book are you on, my son?"

"Grammar, sir; my syntax."

"That's right, my son. Get well grounded in the study of your native tongue, and then you will be prepared to take hold of Latin and Greek with good hope of success."

"Yes sir," replied Louis, resuming the reading of the bad novel.

This is a sad picture. If King Solomon had seen it he would have said to the false boy, as he once said to those of like guilt, "*The folly of fools is* DECEIT."

But that ancient king not being present, Louis escaped his rebuke, but his faithful conscience pinched him sharply. It whispered,

"Shame! you deceitful boy."

The book was a small one and Louis dashed hastily along its pages, so that it was soon finished. He was just yawning over the closed book when

Digitized by Google

he heard Peter Clinton's well-known whistle under the window.

"There's Peter!" he exclaimed half aloud, "I wonder what he wants with me to-night." he added to himself.

"Never mind Peter. Get your lessons, suggested Conscience.

But who ever knew boy or girl to heed the words of Conscience just after reading a bad novel? I never did. Louis did not on this occasion. The novel had killed his relish for study, and it had weakened his purpose to be a student. So he pushed aside the suggestion of his conscience by inwardly exclaiming, "Bother the lessons!" and then went out to see what Peter wanted.

"Louis, there's fun up to-night. Don't you want to go?" said Peter.

"What is it, Pete?"

"There's going to be a corn roasting party this evening out at Ned Wallace's. I've got an invitation for you."

Digitized by Google

"At Ned Wallace's? Don't know about going out there."

"Why not? Ned's respectable now, and his father always was. The old man is quite proud of Ned since he's reformed, and he's going to give us a real old-fashioned treat. The corn is to be roasted before a wood fire in his big kitchen fireplace. They say it's first rate, roasted in that way."

"I shouldn't wonder if it is," replied Louis, smacking his lips. "My mouth waters at the thought of it."

"Will you go?"

"I'll ask father if I may," replied Louis, as he turned to go into the house.

Mr. Sinclair, on hearing Louis's statement and request, took out his watch, and remarked, —

"It's rather late, half past seven, to go out, my son."

"I'll be back soon after nine, pa?" pleaded Louis.

Digitized by Google

"Well, you may go, as a reward for your diligence in getting your lessons this evening," replied Mr. Sinclair.

"Thank you, sir," said Louis, with a blush so deep that, but for the shadow in which he stood, it would have awakened suspicion in the breast of his trustful father that something was wrong.

"Shame!" whispered his conscience. "You are a hypocrite. Don't let your father remain deceived any longer. Tell him the truth!"

"It is almost too bad to pull the wool over the old man's eyes like that," murmured the wayward boy, as he put on his outside coat in the hall, "but then, he deceived himself. I did not say I was studying my lessons."

"Your actions said it, and you meant they should," rejoined his conscience.

"Oh, botheration!" exclaimed Louis, intending by that idle word, to silence the voice of his monitor.

Digitized by Google

Of course he succeeded. Every boy's conscience retires to its quiet chamber in the soul when it is treated rudely, very much after the manner of a snail when its horns are touched. But a silenced conscience does not restore innocence to the guilty.

Louis and Peter found several other boys at the house of Mr. Wallace. Edward felt honored because his invitation was accepted by some boys, Sidney among the others, who had formerly shunned him. His father and mother were still more delighted, for their son's reformation had planted new hope in their hearts. They did everything in their power to make the hour pass agreeably. There was plenty of late sweet corn, a fine lot of glowing coals in front of a half-consumed back log, and Mr. Wallace himself presided over the roasting, because, as he said many times that evening, "I know how to roast an ear of corn to a turn."

The boys ate corn, and laughed and chatted

Digitized by Google

merrily until half past nine, when Mr. Wallace said, —

"My lads, I should like to keep you here until midnight, but that would offend your fathers and mothers. Boys should keep good hours, so I think you had better get ready to go home now."

Three rousing cheers for "Ned Wallace and his roasted corn," were given in the old farm-house kitchen, and the party broke up.

Louis felt very uncomfortable when his head touched the pillow that night. Nothing had occurred at the corn roasting to cause this, but there were the recollections of the reading of a bad novel, of the early part of the evening wasted, of a father deceived, and of his lessons not learned, to trouble him. Do you wonder that he sighed, tossed restlessly about, and murmured, —

"It's no use. I'm a poor, mean, wicked fellow, and I guess I shall never be anything better."

Digitized by Google

Sleep soon relieved him from this uneasiness, and being wearied with the excitements of the day he slept soundly and did not wake the next morning until a very short time before breakfast.

"My lessons, my lessons!" he exclaimed, as he heard the clock at the head of the stairs strike seven. "I wish I had studied them last night instead of reading that plaguey old novel."

He then started from the bed, hurried through his washing and dressing, and took up his lesson book. But before he had well found the place the breakfast bell rung, and pettishly uttering his favorite exclamation, "botheration!" he threw his book upon the chair, and went down into the dining-room.

It was eight o'clock when he returned to his room. "Half an hour for lessons yet," said he, and then hastening with his books to the library he began conning his grammar.

I need hardly tell you that being hurried in

Digitized by Google

feeling and having more work to do than he could achieve in half an hour, he did not make much progress. He tried hard but accomplished little, and when the sound of the Academy bell summoned him to school, he closed his book with a vexed spirit and went out muttering:

"It's no use for a fellow like me to try."

Still, in spite of his discouragement he did try after reaching school. Bending his mind to his work he very nearly mastered his first lesson before his class was called up to recite. As a consequence he escaped censure though he did not win praise. Mr. Mildman said nothing, but the fixed and questioning look which he cast upon him, and the little sigh which accompanied it, told Louis that his want of perseverance was more than suspected, and that, already, his teacher's faith in him was at least slightly shaken. Hence, he spent a most uncomfortable morning at school. So uncomfortable that he could not help contrasting it with the joyous hopefulness

Digitized by Google

of the day before. How could he help feeling that, in both cases, he had but eaten the fruit of his own doings? Duty performed had yielded him pleasure; duty neglected was now causing him restlessness and pain. It is always so. No boy or girl can trample on duty and be happy. None who walk hand in hand with Duty can be wholly miserable.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

LOUIS FINDS A RUDDER.

"LOUIS, this is Saturday, you know. Suppose we go down to see Uncle Joe this afternoon," said Sidney, after school, as he walked from the Academy with Louis on one side and Robert on the other.

"I don't care much where I go," replied Louis, in a dejected tone.

"I go in for that trip," said Robert. "I like Uncle Joe, because he is always both jolly and good."

"Yes, he is healthy, wealthy, and wise," added Louis, faintly smiling at the aptness of his quotation from a famous nursery couplet.

Digitized by Google

Then suddenly brightening up a little, he turned to Sidney and said, —

"Sid, what do you think Teacher meant by that copy he wrote for us this morning on the blackboard? '*Purpose is the rudder of a boy's life.*' Queer wasn't it?"

"I think I know what it means," answered Sidney, "but I am not sure that I can tell you. I can't put my thoughts into words always. Suppose we ask Uncle Joe to explain it to us this afternoon?"

"Yes. That's a good idea. What time shall we start?"

"Two o'clock. Will that suit you?"

"O yes. We dine at one, and I can easily get away by two."

"And you, Robert?"

"I'm your humble servant at any time after half past one," replied Robert.

"Then we'll start from my house at two," rejoined Sidney.

Digitized by Google

"All right," was the joint reply.

The boys parted, and Louis went into his father's house with a gloomy brow. The sun was not shining in his heart and, therefore, a cloud covered his face.

He had scarcely hung up his cap in the hall, before he heard the well-known whistle of Peter calling him back to the door.

"There's Pete again," he muttered, as he replaced his cap on his head, "I wonder what he's up to now. I believe Sid's right. We must reform or cut him, and I agreed to help reform him. I'm a pretty reformer, ha, ha!"

His arrival at the door cut his monologue short, and Peter's laughing eye and merry smile drove every cautious feeling from his heart in a moment as if by magic.

"Lou, my hearty," said Peter, "what made you cut a fellow so this morning? I wanted to see you ever so much. There's fun afoot for this afternoon. We're going to fish for perch

Digitized by Google

in the Long Pond, and expect to have a real jolly time. Will you go?"

"Who is going?" inquired Louis feeling strongly inclined to accept the invitation, notwithstanding the engagement he had just made with Sidney and Robert.

"Godfrey — I've made up with him you know — and Fred and Ned, and half a dozen other good fellows. Fred's father is going to send us all down in his big ox-cart. My! won't it be fun to go two miles in such grand style! You'll go won't you, Lou?"

"I'd like to, Pete, first-rate, but I've promised to go down to Uncle Joe's farm, with Sid and Bob."

"O, let Uncle Joe go to Jericho," replied Peter, laughing. "Why, he'll preach to you all the afternoon, and you'll be as dull as an old monk before dinner. We shall be as jolly as porpoises. Come, go with us, there's a dear, good old fellow!"

Digitized by Google

Louis hesitated still. His promise, his desire to become a better boy, and his duty, all bade him refuse; but his love of fun and fishing, with his old habit of self-indulgence pleaded for the fishing party. Peter, seeing his hesitation, kept pressing his point, and seemed very likely to succeed when Mrs. Sinclair came to the door and said, —

"Louis, my dear, I want you."

"Yes mother," replied he, and then turning to Peter he said, "Good-by Pete," and ran into the house without giving his friend any decided answer. Happily for him Peter took his conduct in high dudgeon and went off frowning, and saying to himself, —

"Let him go to his mammy. I believe he's only a spoon after all."

Thus by the merest accident did Louis escape the snare set for him by his old friend, Peter. There can be no doubt but that he would have broken his engagement with Sidney, if his

Digitized by Google

mother had not withdrawn him from the toils which Peter's eloquence was weaving about his feet. His victory was not, therefore, real. It was only accidental. I think he felt this somewhat, for after doing a little errand for his mother he threw himself into a big chair in the library and talking half aloud, said, —

"It would have been mean to break my word with Sid. I'm glad I didn't promise to go with Pete. Though, plague me, if I don't think I should if mother hadn't called me. I wish I had a stiffer will."

That was not a bad wish for such a fickle boy as Louis, but wishing never made a weak boy strong. It is earnest WILLING, not idle *wishing*, which does the work of life.

Peter did not return and Louis, left to himself, went to Sidney's house after dinner. Robert was already there, and the three started at once for Uncle Joe's farm.

To their surprise they found on their arrival

Digitized by Google

that Clara had invited her cousin, Julia, and Nellie Warren to spend the afternoon with her.

"A pretty pair of sly-boots, you are," said Sidney to his sister and Nellie, "not to tell your brothers that you were coming here."

"Tell your brothers, indeed!" exclaimed Clara De Grey. "Why should they tell you anything, I should like to know? What right have *brothers* to know their sister's engagements?"

"None but the right which brotherly affection gives them," replied Sidney.

"Brotherly fiddlesticks!" retorted Clara, with a merry laugh. "Brothers think themselves little lords who have a divine right to rule their sisters. I'd teach 'em better things if I were plagued with them."

"You'd give all the saucy ringlets on your head, Miss Clara, if you had such a brother as Julia has," said Louis.

"Or as Nellie Warren's," added Robert, laughing.

Digitized by Google

"Out with you, you bundle of brotherly conceit!" cried Clara, pretending to strike Robert with her netting needle. Then turning to Louis, she said, "As for you, Master Louis, your great want is a sister to keep you straight. You talk about winning a medal I hear. Did you ever hear of a boy who had no sister, winning a medal? Faugh! I don't think you can keep in one mind long enough to study two day's lessons. You need a sister, I tell you, to play queen over you."

True words are often spoken in jest. Louis felt this while Clara kept up a running fire of fun and banter upon him. The young lady's jesting had such sharp points that it wounded him deeply. He became first silent, and then the tears filled his eyes and rolled slowly down his cheeks.

"You are too severe on Louis," said Julia De Grey to Clara, observing Louis' emotion.

"I'm sorry," replied Clara, now for the first

Digitized by Google

time noticing the tears in Louis' eyes. The sight pained her, for with all her love of banter she had a very kind heart. Making an effort to relieve Louis she added, "I was only joking, Louis; I did not mean what I said."

"But it was true," sobbed Louis, entirely breaking down.

The burst of wounded feeling, so unusual in Louis, caused quite a scene. Fortunately, Uncle Joe came in, and shrewdly guessing at what had taken place, he contrived to get the girls out of the room by saying, —

"Clara, dear, suppose you and your lady friends go and gather a few bunches of grapes for these young gents. I believe boys generally love grapes, especially sweet ones, eh? boys, how is it?"

"We acknowledge the corn," said Robert, with a merry laugh.

The three girls understood Uncle Joe's hint and speedily left. The good man then took

Digitized by Google

Louis by the hand and by questioning the others, readily learned the occasion of the scene.

Louis, whose emotions were not very deep, soon recovered himself, and gave an account of his recent failures to keep his resolution. Uncle Joe gave him much good advice, and to his inquiries about the meaning of the copy, "*Purpose is the rudder of a boy's life*," said, —

"Your *purpose* is what you mean to be or to do. What, for example, did you mean to do when you left home this afternoon, Louis?"

"To come down here, sir."

"Very well; that was your *purpose*. What did that purpose lead you to do?"

"To walk down the road to this place."

"Yes. It guided your steps just as a rudder guides a ship. That purpose was your rudder then. By its help you steered yourself into Uncle Joe's port."

"Yes sir."

"But your copy said, 'Purpose is the rudder

Digitized by Google

of a boy's *life.*' These words, you see, have a wider meaning than I have yet given them. They teach that a boy's life will be determined by what he *purposes* to be or to do. If he have no clear, set purpose to be one thing more than another, he will be like a ship at sea without a rudder. He will drift into all manner of sorrows upon the tides of temptation. If he mean to be a self-indulgent boy wishing, for example, for nothing higher than plenty to eat, and little to do, his life will end in failure, guilt and woe. If he intend to build up a right character for himself, that purpose will cause him to apply to the Saviour of mankind, that he may receive pardon, purity and power. Do you understand, Louis?"

"I think I do, sir," replied the boy very solemnly.

"Very good, my son, only you must not rest in merely *knowing*. You must *act decidedly, promptly*. You must make up your mind

Digitized by Google

what you will live for. You must decide *what* you mean to be and to do. If you are right-minded, you must say, I will strive to be an upright, true, diligent, temperate, Christian boy, and then you must go to the Mighty Helper, with all the trust of a penitent and loving heart, in daily prayer for strength. Will you form such a purpose, my dear boy?"

"Yes, sir," replied Louis, with great firmness and in a solemn tone of voice. His manner showed that all the earnestness of his nature had gone into his purpose. Uncle Joe saw this and was satisfied. He spoke many words of instruction and encouragement, and, finally placing his hands upon the boy's head, he prayed that a purpose to gain and maintain a truly Christian character, might be the rudder of his life to guide him, first, to earthly honor, and finally, to still greater dignity in the realm where pure and noble souls are to abide with their Lord forever.

Digitized by Google

Louis' heart echoed deep amens to the good man's prayer. His eyes were opened to see a true plan of his future life and his young heart felt a sense of repose and a consciousness of strength, such as it had never known before. I have no doubt but that he then and there received that power which the Great God gives freely to all truly earnest, trustful souls, and which he takes especial delight in giving to the young.

When Uncle Joe led the three boys into the dining-room to partake of the grapes gathered by the girls, there was a firmness in Louis' step, an elevation in his manner, and a light in his eyes which impressed even the lively Clara, so that she ventured on no more bantering words.

After the grapes were eaten, a game of croquet on the lawn, was proposed. All parties, including Uncle Joe, enjoyed it. The whole company afterwards took an early tea together, and then the three boys with the two young lady visitors, started for their village homes.

Digitized by Google

On their way, they met Peter Clinton dripping wet, and daubed with mud. Louis hailed him, saying, —

"Did you have a good time, Pete?"

"Of course we did," replied Peter. "I never had such fun in my life. We did nothing but laugh all the afternoon. In fact, we laughed so we upset the boat and took a grand ducking. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where are your fish, Peter?" asked Robert.

"Fish! We didn't get any. 'Twant a good day for fishing," replied Peter.

"I'm glad I didn't go with you, Pete," said Louis. "I think I feel a good deal better inside and out, than you do. Good-by."

"Maybe so. Maybe not so. Good-by!" replied Peter, laughing.

And so they parted. Louis went right to his mother, and told her what he had heard and felt at Uncle Joe's. His mother kissed him fondly and said, —

Digitized by Google

"Now, my son, I have little fear of your failure in your studies and duties. You have discovered the source of real power. May Heaven bless thee evermore, my dear, dear boy!"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI.

TESTS AND TRIALS.

THE boy who undertakes to row a boat up a stream, soon feels the force of its downward current. In like manner, our friend Louis soon found that, in steering with his newborn purpose, the tides of his old habits set in an opposite direction and had to be overcome by the force of a strong will.

In searching for his text books that evening he uncovered two or three of those cheap novels, which had so often beguiled him of his study hour. They, or, at least, some of them, were unread, and one of their titles, which contained the word "bandit," excited a sudden and strong

Digitized by Google

wish to read the volume. He yielded so far as to open the book when the copy of the morning and the purpose of the afternoon flashed before his mind.

"Yes," said he half aloud, "purpose is a rudder and I mean to steer by mine to-night. I mean to study. These novels may go to Texas."

With these words he hurled the tempting books across the room. As they fell, it occurred to him that those exciting novels were unfit for a boy of good purposes to read at all.

"They are bad books," said he to himself, "I know they are. They make me feel wicked; I always go to dreaming about being like the bad fellows they tell about. They make me discontented too, and they waste my time. Besides, Pa has told me never to read them. I wont read them any more, I'll burn them."

Acting promptly on this resolution, Louis took the books and carried them into the cellar.

Digitized by Google

The evening being chilly there was a fire in the furnace. He threw his bad novels into it, and as the flames seized them, he said,

"There they go into smoke. I'm glad I burned them. They wont tempt me any more."

This was a good step for Louis to take. It was an act of earnest dealing with his temptations and helped to make his purpose stronger. He felt this as he sat down to his lessons, for he went at them with a zest which made study a pleasure.

Before nine o'clock came, his lessons were mastered. Rising from his seat he stretched out his hand and addressing his books, said, —

"I've conquered you, old fellows, this time. I'm ready for Monday morning, and I'm ready for Sunday School too. Hurrah for us!"

Of course Louis slept sweetly that night. He was in the right way and could afford to rest in peace.

The next day also brought him new pleas-

Digitized by Google

ures. The sermon seemed the most interesting, he said to his mother, of all the sermons he had ever heard, and the lesson was the most beautiful he had ever studied.

"Perhaps," his mother suggested, "your own state of mind made them appear so. The same things appear different to us at different times and in different states of mind."

No doubt his mother was right. Dry crusts taste sweet to children when they are hungry, while the sweetest jams are tasteless to full stomachs. Louis was hungry for something to strengthen his purpose that day, and therefore, he relished the good things dispensed from the pulpit and in the Sunday School.

Shortly after dinner Peter Clinton appeared outside the fence, beckoning Louis, who was at the parlor window, to come out. Louis shook his head, at first, but Peter continued to make such earnest signs, that he finally went out to the gate and said, —

Digitized by Google

"Well, Pete, what now?"

"Something nice," replied Peter, smacking his lips.

"What is it?"

"Don't you wish you knew, Louis?"

"I don't know that I do, Pete. I've just had a nice dinner and don't feel particularly hungry just now."

"Chestnuts!" said Peter, winking his eye, very knowingly.

"Chestnuts? Where?" asked Louis, who was very fond of chestnuts.

"O, I know. Don't you wish you did?"

"Well, yes, I don't know but I do. Why don't you tell a fellow?"

"You know there was a frost last night, Louis. The first this fall. Well, I know a tree that's always the first to drop its nuts. The fellows will be there to-morrow and I propose to steal a march on them all, by going to-day. Will you go?"

Digitized by Google

"Why this is Sunday!" exclaimed Louis.

"I know that as well as you," retorted Peter, "but I don't see any harm in gathering a few nuts, if it is Sunday."

"Well, I do," rejoined Louis, very decidedly, as he called his purpose to mind. "I wont go, and I advise you not to go, either. No good ever comes from Sabbath breaking."

"You are getting very good, I guess," sneered Peter. "You mean to train in Sid De Grey's company I see. You are getting to be a regular sap-head, Louis."

"Maybe the sap is in your head instead of mine," retorted Louis a little sharply, as he turned upon his heel to go in doors. Then a voice in his heart whispered, "this is not the way to reform Peter." He gave due heed to this wise monitor, and going back to the gate, called after Peter, saying, —

"Here, Pete, come back! Come into the house with me!"

Digitized by Google

"Get out!" was Peter's ungracious reply as he hurried away, "disgusted," as he afterward said, "with Louis' notions." Peter was going down hill.

But for his sharp retort upon Peter, Louis would have felt quite satisfied with his conduct in this little affair. Certainly, his purpose had kept him from drifting into the stream of this temptation to break the holy Sabbath.

The next day brought fresh laurels to Louis' brow at school. His lessons were perfect, his diligence faultless. For several days he excelled in all his studies, and in spite of his past faults, was in a fair way to win at least one of the prize medals.

Godfrey Warren, who was in the same classes with Louis, did not relish his success. One day, when, after quite a contest over a parsing lesson, he saw Louis ascend above him to the second place in the grammar class, he allowed a very bitter feeling of envy to take

Digitized by Google

possession of his soul. Envy is cruel and has no scruples, you know; and, therefore, you will not be surprised to be told of the mean tricks to which Godfrey resorted that he might recover his lost place in his class.

He began by teasing Louis out of school hoping to provoke a fight. But Louis was not naturally a fighting boy, and now, being purposed to be and to do right, it was not easy for Godfrey to accomplish this end. Louis avoided him as much as possible.

Godfrey contrived by paying particular attention to Peter Clinton to enlist him in his warfare on Louis. Peter really liked Louis better than Godfrey, but just now felt piqued because, as he said, "Louis had cut him." He, therefore, readily joined Godfrey in an effort to "bring down Louis' pride," as that bad boy phrased it.

Godfrey had observed that when Louis recited his lessons, he was in the habit of fixing his eyes on the upper part of the wall near the

Digitized by Google

ceiling. Godfrey had read of the boy mentioned by Sir Walter Scott who always kept his fingers on a particular button of his vest when reciting his lessons, and who missed a word and lost his place, one day, when some cunning classmate slily cut off that button. It struck him that if he could place something ludicrous on that part of the wall at which Louis gazed while in the act of reciting, it would divert his attention, cause him to blunder, and so lose his place. This was a thought which would never have entered any but a cunning mind.

How to do this, was a question on which Godfrey pondered many hours. At last, he hit upon the following plan.

He noticed that there was a small staple in the cornice just over that part of the wall at which Louis looked so wistfully. Having more than common skill with the crayon he prepared a very ludicrous drawing of a boy suffering with the toothache and a quaint, Punch-like figure,

Digitized by Google

with a big pair of tongs standing near him, as if asking permission to extract the aching tooth. It was well done and could not be looked at without laughter. His plan was to get that drawing pulled up to the cornice by means of the staple and strings, just as Louis should begin his recitation. In looking towards the wall, Louis would be sure to see it, blunder, and lose his place.

Peter's help was necessary to the execution of this little trick. It happened that his seat was just beneath the staple, and that the teacher's desk stood out somewhat from the wall to avoid a recess caused by the very large chimney. When the classes recited their lessons they stood across the floor in front of his desk with their faces toward the recess; the teacher's back being, of course, toward the recess. If, therefore, the thing could be prepared, it would be easy for Peter to run the crayon up the wall in the nick of time.

Digitized by Google

Godfrey explained all this to the joke-loving boy, not so much in the aspect of an injury to Louis as of a nice bit of fun. Peter fell plump into Godfrey's trap. Rubbing his hands gleefully, he said, —

"It will be capital, Goddie! How Louis will stare and sputter!"

"You must pull it down quickly, after he sees it," remarked Godfrey, "for if the other fellows see it too, they will laugh like mad, and we shall catch what wont be quite as nice as roly-poly pudding."

"That's so! I'll manage it, though. This child isn't very green, is he Goddie?"

"Not half as green as a gherkin," replied Godfrey giving his dupe a playful nudge on the ribs.

It was necessary to the execution of this trick that the two tricksters should obtain the key of the Academy, or find access to it out of school hours in some way.

Digitized by Google

To borrow the key would excite suspicion if their trick was discovered by the teacher. Hence at recess, Peter contrived to undo the fastening of a window sash which was rarely opened at that season and, therefore, not likely to be examined by the janitor.

At the close of an afternoon session these boys lingered around the grove until they saw the janitor go home. Then leaving their hiding place they slid up the window sash and entered the schoolroom.

By means of a step ladder, which was kept in a closet, they easily reached the staple in the cornice. They passed a bit of brownish white linen thread through the staple, and let the two ends run down to Peter's desk below. The cardboard with the grotesque drawing was fastened at the top to one end of the thread. Another long thread was tied to the bottom of the card. Then by pulling the other thread which was in the staple, the cardboard was

Digitized by Google

readily raised to any desired height on the wall, and as readily pulled down again by another thread attached to the bottom of the picture.

"Our experiment succeeds to a T," said Godfrey.

"It's grand! You deserve a patent, Goddie," replied Peter, "and your name ought to be written high among great inventors, — Ha, ha, ha!"

Godfrey's grim smile showed how highly he relished Peter's admiration, which was increased when after removing the drawing he began, by means of very small pins, to fasten the thread to a pillar or stud, which, being thicker than its fellow-studs, stood partly out from the plaster, and was painted white. When he had finished, he said, —

"There, Pete, our argus-eyed teacher must look very sharp before he sees that thread, and you can easily pull it over the pins when the time comes."

Digitized by Google

"O, you prince of contrivers. What a genius you possess!" cried Peter, eyeing Godfrey with unfeigned delight.

Thus did envy lay its plans and dig its pits for the feet of Louis, merely because he was trying to do his duty and was likely to succeed. Isn't envy a cruel and wicked vice?

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII.

THE CRAYON ON THE WALL.

THE next morning when it came to be Louis' turn to recite several rules in Syntax, he, as usual, when in the act of recitation, fixed his eye on the wall. Peter, who was on the alert, pulled up the crayon at the critical moment. Louis saw it, stared, hesitated, then stammered, and finally stopped speaking.

"Go on, sir!" said the teacher, sharply.

Louis blushed, stammered a few words, and gave it up. Godfrey, who stood next to him, readily repeated the required rules and Louis lost his place. Indeed, he was so thoroughly embarrassed that he could recall nothing cor-

Digitized by Google

rectly, and so, by adding blunder to blunder, he went to the bottom of the class. Godfrey's trick was so far successful, and he was already exchanging sly glances of merriment with Peter when, the recitation being over, a boy named Richard Chester raised his hand.

"Speak!" said Mr. Mildman.

"If you please, sir, Peter Clinton pulled a funny picture up the wall and put Master Sinclair out, and that's why he missed his lesson."

Mr. Mildman looked surprised. Then turning round he fixed his eyes on Peter and said, "Clinton, what have you been doing?"

"Nothing!" replied Peter, doggedly.

"Nothing, eh? We shall see." Then turning to the boy who had spoken, he asked, "what did you say Peter Clinton did?"

"Pulled a funny picture up the wall, sir," replied the boy.

"Peter Clinton, bring me that picture!" said the teacher, sternly.

Digitized by Google

"I have no picture," replied Peter, sullenly.

"No picture, eh? We shall see about that," rejoined the teacher.

Mr. Mildman, after bidding the grammar class remain where it was, went to Peter's desk in search of the funny picture. It was not there. In vain he searched among his books and in his atlas. No such picture could be found. The teacher was perplexed. He was about to return to his seat, when his eye caught sight of the thread which held the crayon. Pulling it towards himself, he drew up the picture from behind Peter's desk, where that cunning boy had adroitly dropped it. Looking sadly at the now confused lad, he said, —

"Peter Clinton, I knew you were very fond of mischief, but I did not think you were bad enough to tell me a deliberate lie. I'm very sorry, my dear boy, and I will investigate this matter by and by." Then turning towards the class, he added, "the grammar class may retire."

Digitized by Google

Godfrey had so far succeeded with his plot as to win Louis' place. But the discovery of the crayon annoyed him so much that his success gave him no pleasure. He was afraid that the inquiry, which was sure to come, would expose him to the scorn of his schoolmates. He cherished a faint hope, however, that Peter would not "peach," as he vulgarly termed it, but allow all the blame to rest on himself. To this end he cast sundry glances and made significant motions with his fingers every time he caught Peter's eye when Mr. Mildman was busy.

Peter's manner did not give him much ground for hope. He "made mouths" and once or twice held his thumb with open palm against the tip of his nose. This was decidedly vulgar, as you know, but it was Peter's symbolic way of saying, "I don't care a straw for your wishes."

Louis was troubled at the loss of his place. He knew that the sight of the crayon had "put

Digitized by Google

him out," and that he was not blameworthy; still his rank in the class was lost. He did not know that he was the victim of a plot, though he did say to himself, as he glanced toward Peter, "It was curious that Peter should run up that queer picture, just as I was going to recite. I don't understand it."

In going to his seat Louis had passed Sidney who had slipped a bit of paper into his hand. He now looked at this crumpled note and found these two words written on it, "NEVER DESPAIR."

Louis smiled. The words fell upon his heart like a warm, bright sunbeam. He felt their power deep down in his soul. They lighted every chamber in his heart. He cast a glance of gratitude at Sidney, and opening his text book, gave himself wholly to the study of his next lesson.

Mr. Mildman looked grave and thoughtful. He was troubled and somewhat doubtful how to

Digitized by Google

proceed. But when the bell rung for recess his looks showed that he had made up his mind what to do. In a tone, which was sharp and commanding, he said, —

"The grammar class and Peter Clinton will remain in during recess."

As soon as the other scholars had left the room, Mr. Mildman addressed Richard Chester, saying, —

"Chester, tell me all you know of the picture which was on the wall this morning!"

"I was watching Louis, sir," replied the boy, "to hear how he would recite his lesson. I saw him start as if he saw something. I looked up at the wall yonder, for you know he always looks toward the ceiling when he says his lesson, and there I saw a funny picture. I only saw it a moment, for Peter Clinton pulled it down quick as a flash.'

"Is that all you know about it?"

"Yes, sir."

Digitized by Google

"Very well. You may retire!"

Chester left the schoolroom, and Mr. Mildman, turning to Louis, asked, —

"Do you know anything about this crayon, Sinclair?"

"Only what Chester has just stated, sir. I saw it and it made me forget my lesson, for the moment, though I knew every word of it when I stood up."

"Very well. You may retire, my son," rejoined the teacher in kindly tones.

Then looking keenly at the remaining members of the class, particularly at Godfrey, Mr. Mildman said, —

"If any of you know anything about that picture you can tell me, if not you may retire."

None of the boys knew anything except Godfrey, and he was resolved not to betray himself. So they went out and Peter found himself alone with his teacher.

"Peter," said Mr. Mildman, very kindly,

Digitized by Google

"this is an unpleasant business. I want you to tell me all about it."

Peter was just ready to tell, for he saw no reason why he should refrain from exposing Godfrey. But he hardly knew how to begin the story, and therefore he only blushed and looked confused. Mr. Mildman waited a moment or two, and finding he did not speak, said, as he held up the captured crayon, —

"Peter, is this your picture?"

"No, sir."

"Whose is it?"

"Godfrey Warren's, sir."

"As I suspected," remarked the teacher, "but, Peter, what made you pull it up the wall?"

"Because Godfrey said it would be fun to bother Louis, who always stares at the wall when he is reciting, sir."

And now, having got into his subject, Peter went on and told all he knew. What he said

Digitized by Google

I need not repeat, because you already know his part in the affair.

The teacher, having drawn all the facts from Peter, readily saw that the real culprit was Godfrey. He also perceived that selfish boy's probable motive, and resolved to make him thoroughly ashamed of himself, if possible. After a few moments spent in silent thought he sighed, and looking at Peter sadly, said, —

"Clinton, you have done wrong. Your love of fun caused you to fall into the snare spread for your feet by your wary schoolmate. Through yielding to that motive you committed several offences. You broke into the school-building, which was an offence against the trustees of the Academy. You disturbed the order of the school, which was an offence against me. You caused Louis to lose his place, which was a wrong done to him. By yielding to your own besetting love of fun you strengthened a fault in your own character and thus wronged your-

Digitized by Google

self. By doing injury to others, and by denying that you knew anything of the crayon, which was deliberate lying, you broke the great law of truth and of love to God and to your neighbor. Thereby you sinned against God. I am grieved, greatly grieved. What I shall do I will not now say. For the present I shall leave you to think the matter over, hoping that your own heart will prompt you to do what you can in reparation of the wrongs you have done to others, and to confess your sin to your Creator. You are dismissed for the present!"

Peter had never worn a more sober face than while listening to these weighty words. He was struck with the serious nature of an act which had appeared so trivial before. He had followed Godfrey "just for the fun of the thing," and now he saw that with fun for a motive he had been guilty of *sinning against four separate parties*. For once his thoughtless heart was oppressed, and he entered the playground, wearing a very serious face.

Digitized by Google

Godfrey, filled with the anxiety of guilt, was waiting for him, and Peter had scarcely emerged from the building before he was greeted with the question, —

"Did you peach on me?"

Peter's heart recoiled from his tempter, and his anger rose against him. He replied sharply, —

"I told all I knew."

"Then you are a mean, contemptible fellow," cried Godfrey, greatly excited.

"That's true," retorted Peter, catching fire from the sparks of the other's temper, "but if I was half as mean and contemptible as Godfrey Warren I would hide my head in a coon skin."

"If you don't take that back, I'll pull your ears off," said Godfrey, seizing Peter's ears and pulling them savagely.

Peter screamed with pain. Other boys came up and several of them took hold of Godfrey's arms, while one boy cried, —

Digitized by Google

"Shame!"

"Godfrey Warren's a coward!" shouted another.

"Let Pete alone!" cried several other voices.

"Warren!" said a grave voice, interrupting the clamor.

Godfrey looked round and was startled to meet the penetrating glance of Mr. Mildman's eyes. His hands dropped from Peter's ears, and his own ears tingled as his teacher said, —

"I hold you accountable, Godfrey Warren, for this cowardly conduct. Go into the school-room immediately, sir!"

Godfrey sullenly and slowly walked into the Academy, followed by Mr. Mildman. The boys gathered round Peter, who, thoroughly roused by the treatment he had received, told them the story of his part in the trick of pulling the crayon up the wall. Boys are quick to read each others' motives, and they at once saw that

Digitized by Google

Peter had been the tool of Godfrey, and that Godfrey had used him for the purpose of getting Louis to blunder, and lose rank in his class. One of them spoke the general sentiment, when he said, —

"That Godfrey Warren is as mean as dirt, and as foxy as a confidence man."

"That's so!" responded a chorus of voices.

"I don't see how you came to let Goddie pull the wool over your eyes so, Pete," said one of the boys.

"I'm always easy when fun's up, you know," replied Peter.

"But I don't see the fun in doing dirty work for Godfrey," rejoined the boy. "Why! it was the fable of the cat and the chestnuts exactly. You pulled the nuts out of the fire, and Godfrey ate them."

"Maybe they'll burn his mouth," exclaimed another boy. To which remark, a half dozen responded, "We hope they will."

Digitized by Google

"Louis!" said Peter, in presence of the crowd of boys, "I'm sorry I helped play that trick on you. Will you forgive a fellow?"

"To be sure I will with all my heart," replied Louis, grasping Peter's hand.

"Nobly done, Louis!" exclaimed Sidney, placing his hand on his friend's shoulder.

"I'm glad you think so," replied Louis.

The boys cheered, for like all intelligent boys, they admired generous actions. The school-bell rung, the playground was speedily vacated, and school duties resumed, while each boy was secretly thinking, "What will be done to Godfrey?"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII.

CONFESSIONS AND PUNISHMENTS.

PETER CLINTON, on going to his seat, began to reflect. The remarks of his teacher had touched his conscience, and he was inclined to listen to those good voices which always speak out in children's hearts when they are willing to listen. His good voice whispered the word *confession*.

"Yes," said he to himself, "confession! Teacher meant that, I suppose, when he said he hoped my heart would tell me what to do by way of making reparation. I have confessed to Louis, and it's all right again in that quarter. I wish it was all right everywhere else. Heigho!"

Digitized by Google

Peter's sigh was so loud as to attract the momentary attention of Mr. Mildman, who on looking round and seeing his sober face, said nothing, but as if he divined his thoughts, gave him a smile of encouragement.

Peter resolved to write a confession at once. His mind was too much disturbed to study. So taking a sheet of of paper from his desk, he wrote as his heart dictated; and then folding the paper handed it to the teacher.

Mr. Mildman read it, and then brushed away the tear, which sprang unbidden to his eye. The paper led him to decide on settling at once the questions growing out of the offence of the morning. A tap of his bell having obtained silence, he looked up and said, —

"Godfrey Warren and Peter Clinton will come out on to the floor!"

The two boys obeyed, but with quite different manners. Peter stepped out cheerfully, but respectfully, for he had made up his mind to do

Digitized by Google

right. Godfrey moved slowly, and with downcast eyes under a scowling brow; for he was still under the dominion of wrong feelings.

"Godfrey Warren," said the teacher, sternly, "will you tell me what you had to do with the picture which was raised on the wall this morning?"

"I didn't raise any picture, sir," replied the boy, doggedly.

"That's an evasion, sir," rejoined the teacher. "I wish you would be frank and tell me all you know about the picture."

Godfrey made no reply.

"Did you draw this crayon?" asked Mr. Mildman.

"Yes, sir."

"Did you arrange with Peter Clinton to pull it up the wall, as you know he did this morning?"

"I didn't make him do it, sir!"

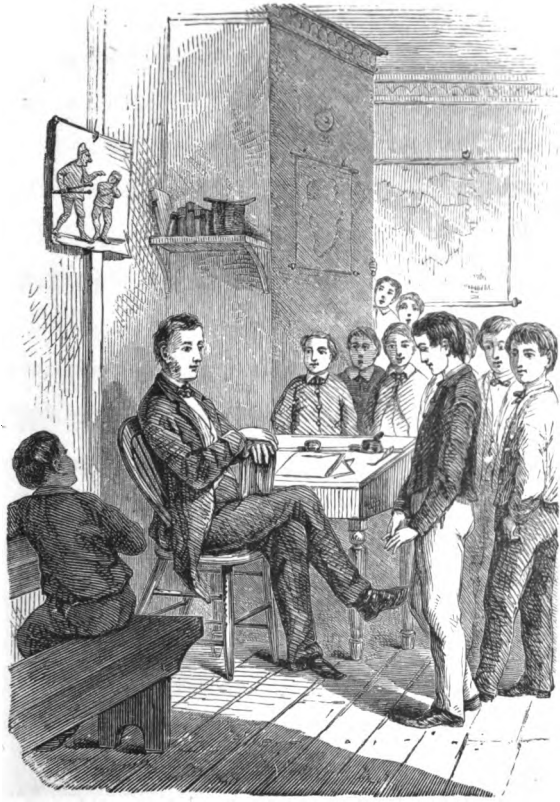
"An evasion, again. Why can't you be frank and true, Godfrey?"

Digitized by Google

THE CLASS PUNISHED. Page 176.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE EXPOSURE. Page 176.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

To this appeal he made no answer. He did not know precisely how much Peter had told Mr. Mildman, or he would have confessed to the limit of his teacher's knowledge. But he was resolved not to confess a word more than was already known, if he could avoid it. He had a crooked nature, a heart under the dominion of bad qualities.

Finding that he could not extract either information or confession from the sturdy, obstinate boy, the teacher addressed the school in words something like the following:

"Boys, from all that I can learn of this strange affair, I think that this boy, Godfrey Warren, being jealous of the recent advances in study made by Master Sinclair, resolved to accomplish by a trick, what he could not effect by merit. He had noticed an odd habit which Sinclair has of gazing at the top of the wall yonder, when in the act of recitation. He had probably read of the boy at Walter Scott's

Digitized by Google

school, who always twirled his vest button when reciting, and who was taken down when one day he unexpectedly found it gone, some mean fellow having slyly cut it off for this very purpose. These things suggested to Warren's mind the idea of running a grotesque picture up the wall, just as Sinclair began his recitation. Concealing his real purpose from Peter Clinton, he prevailed on him to act as his accomplice. Peter did so, merely for the fun of the thing, and as you know, the trick was so far successful this morning, that Louis Sinclair lost his rank in the class. But, like all wrong means for gaining even proper ends, it failed of fully answering his purpose. It was exposed at the time by Richard Chester, and Peter Clinton has since made a very frank and full confession of his part in the affair. You see, therefore, that Godfrey, unable to excel by merit, has resorted to a trick. By what terms would you designate his conduct?"

Digitized by Google

"It was mean!" replied one boy.

"It was unmanly!" added another.

"It was wicked!" responded a third.

"It was selfish!" said a fourth boy.

"It was unprincipled!" added a fifth.

"Mean, unmanly, wicked, selfish, unprincipled," repeated Mr. Mildman. "These are harsh terms. How many of you think them fitly applied to the conduct of Godfrey?"

Every boy raised his hand except Louis.

"Do you differ in judgment from all your schoolmates, Louis?" inquired the teacher.

"If you please, sir, I would rather be excused from giving my opinion," replied Louis, slightly blushing.

"A very judicious, not to say generous, request," observed Mr. Mildman. Then taking up the paper which contained Peter's confession, he said:

"I hold a paper in my hand which is every way creditable to its writer. I will read it to the school."

Digitized by Google

LINDENDALE ACADEMY, Sept. 16, 186–.

DEAR TEACHER: — I am very sorry that I had anything to do with raising the picture on the wall this morning. I did not wish to get Louis Sinclair taken down in his class, but only to have a little fun. I have asked his forgiveness. I am sorry I broke into the school-room to fix the strings, and I hope you will ask the trustees to forgive me for that. I am sorry I told you a lie, and that I broke the order of the school. I beg your pardon, teacher, and I will try hereafter to be a better boy.

I am, your humble pupil,

PETER CLINTON.

To MR. CHARLES MILDMAN.

"There, boys, is Peter Clinton's confession; what do you think I ought to do with him?"

"Forgive him, sir!" cried a chorus of voices.

"Forgive him? What! let him off without any punishment?"

Digitized by Google

"Yes," said the boys.

"But how can I maintain order in the school, if I don't punish him for such misconduct as he confesses in this note?"

"Please, sir, Peter is too sorry to do the like again, whether you whip him or not," said the single voice of Richard Chester.

"I believe he is," replied the master, "and that, with his free and full confession, makes it safe for me to forgive him, which I freely do. Peter, my dear boy, I hope that to-day we see you at a turning-point in your life; and that hereafter you will seek improvement for yourself, and happiness for others, instead of making fun the aim of your life, as you seem to have done heretofore. You may go to your seat."

Peter looked the gratitude which it was not proper to speak at that moment, and went to his desk. Then Mr. Mildman turned to Godfrey, and said, —

Digitized by Google

"Warren, have you anything to say for yourself?"

"No," replied he, gruffly, and disrespectfully.

"Do you deny anything that has been stated about you in this affair?"

"I don't know that I care to."

"Then you admit your guilt; especially that you invented this mean little trick to get above Louis?"

"I suppose I did," muttered Godfrey.

"Very well. But before dealing with you, I must do an act of justice to another." Then addressing Louis, he added; "Sinclair, step out here!"

Louis obeyed. Mr. Mildman, speaking kindly, said, —

"I understood you to say that but for the confusion caused by the picture, you could have recited your lesson this morning?"

"Yes sir."

Digitized by Google

"Could you recite it now?"

"I think I could, sir."

"Very good. Proceed with the rules, beginning with the one on adverbs."

Louis obeyed, and recited the rules without hesitation, or missing a word.

"Now, boys, you see that Louis lost his place by unfair means this morning. Would it be right for me to mark him with credits instead of discredits? and to restore him to his place in the class?"

"Yes, *sir*," replied a chorus of voices, with marked emphasis.

"Very good. He is restored. Now what ought I to do with Godfrey Warren?

"Punish him, sir," replied nearly every boy in the school.

"But why may I not forgive him, as I did Peter?"

"Because he was worse than Peter," replied one.

Digitized by Google

"Because he isn't sorry," said another.

"Yes. Because he is not sorry I cannot forgive him," said Mr. Mildman. "I must punish him. He has done one of the meanest acts of which a boy is capable. I am ashamed of him. I pity him, too, for he has shown himself to be without nobleness of character. He has been guided by unmixed selfishness, and shown that he is the slave of the lowest feelings in the human heart. He sought to injure Sinclair; he led Clinton astray; he broke into the Academy, and thereby wronged the trustees; he disturbed the order of the school, and thereby did me a wrong. You see that his offence is a very serious one. I shall punish him by requiring him to apologize to the trustees, and to Sinclair, and to write, as an imposition, the first five hundred lines of his Cæsar; and finally, I shall deprive him of his recess privileges for four weeks."

Here the teacher paused a moment or two,

Digitized by Google

as if in deep thought. Then, after looking round the school with an inquiring glance, he resumed:

"I am more anxious to benefit Godfrey Warren, than to give him pain. It has occurred to me that the ends of justice may be answered, and he be made to see and feel the evil of his conduct, if some of you will volunteer to be his substitutes, and bear, at least, part of the penalties I have imposed on him. The apologies, he must of necessity make himself, but some of you might suffer the loss of the recess privileges, and write the imposition in his stead. Do any of you wish to do it?"

The scholars looked at each other in silence for some time. No one seemed willing to be punished in Godfrey's place, for scarcely a boy in the school really loved him. His character had not won friends. At last Louis Sinclair rose and said, —

"I will write his imposition, sir."

Digitized by Google

Then, as a murmur of applause ran round the room, Sidney De Grey rose and added, —

"And I will suffer the loss of recess privileges for two weeks, sir."

"And I," said Peter Clinton, moved by the example of his friends, "will take the other two weeks."

Perhaps there was only one heart in that room which did not thrill, while these boys made their noble offer. That one was Godfrey's. He stood cold as a pillar of ice, with a slight curl of contempt on his lips, and by his expression seemed to reply, —

"All right! If you choose to do it, you may. I don't care."

The teacher felt shocked, as he gazed on the boy's impassive face. He feared that there was nothing good within him to respond to the generous self-denial of the three boys. "Still," said he to himself, "the sight of those boys suffering for his misconduct may yet move

Digitized by Google

him." Then, addressing the subject of his thoughts, he said:

"Godfrey, you will prepare your apology in writing. The remaining parts of your penalty will be suffered for you by your three friends. Take your seat, sir. Now, boys, attend to your usual duties!"

School work then went on through the afternoon. Just before dismission, Godfrey handed in his apology. It ran thus, —

LINDENDALE ACADEMY, Sept 16, 186–.

Sir: — I regret that I entered this building in an improper manner, the other evening, and hope the trustees will overlook it. I also regret that I broke the rules of the school. I offer an apology to Louis Sinclair for what I did to him.

Yours respectfully,

GODFREY WARREN.

MR. C. MILDMAN.

Digitized by Google

The teacher read this ungracious note aloud, looked coldly at the boy, said "very well, sir," and dismissed the school.

But he could not so readily dismiss the feelings awakened by the display of bad character made by Godfrey. His heart was made sad by it, and as he left the Academy he sighed, and exclaimed, —

"What can I do to save that boy from himself?"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HERO OF THE HOUR.

BOYS quickly recognize and ardently admire noble actions. Louis felt this when leaving school that afternoon. Boy after boy came to him and said, —

"Louis, you are a real brick, but that Godfrey Warren is about the meanest fellow out. He isn't worth the time it will cost you to write that imposition."

Of course Sidney and Clinton received similar compliments, but Louis was the hero of the hour. It was he whom Godfrey had sought to injure, and he had agreed to write five hundred lines in Latin on his account! It was really wonderful in the eyes of the boys that Louis

Digitized by Google

could do such a grand action. It was so unlike the indolent, care-for-nothing, feast-loving Louis Sinclair of the past, that they could not understand it. They did not know that Louis, for some time past, had been secretly drinking at the fountain of living waters, and that a new and better life was created within him. You know it, and are not, therefore, surprised, as they were, at his self-denial.

As for Godfrey he was universally shunned, and he walked home full of bitter feeling. His proud spirit chafed under the discomfitures of the afternoon. Instead of allowing the sacrifices made for him by his schoolmates, to melt away the frost of selfishness, he viewed them through his evil passion and, therefore, his heart grew colder, harder, prouder than ever. Thus like all wrong-headed boys and girls, he became an expert in the art of making himself miserable.

He seemed, however, to have found some

Digitized by Google

consolation from his thoughts, by the time he reached his home, for, as he closed the gate leading to the house, he put his foot to the ground very firmly and exclaimed, loud enough to be heard by Sidney and Louis, who were not far behind him, —

"Yes, I'll do it! I'll do it! As sure as my name is Godfrey, I'll do it!"

"I wonder what he means to do!" whispered Louis.

"That's more than I can guess," replied Sidney. "Something foolish, though, I dare say."

We shall find out, by and by, what it was that Godfrey meant to do.

When Louis sat down at the library table that evening with his writing materials and his "Cæsar" before him, he sighed, and said, —

"Five hundred lines! O, dear! It's a pretty stiff task for me, in addition to my lessons. But then — who knows — it may be

Digitized by Google

a good thing for Goddie. At any rate it *ought* to make him my friend. *Five hundred lines!* I guess I'll do one hundred to-night. O dear!"

Louis felt this imposition to be a heavy burden. He disliked writing steadily, at any time. It was a sore trial to his newly formed purpose which, most likely, would have broken like an over-burdened spring, had it not been tempered in heavenly fire. But it stood the pressure and he toiled briskly through the one hundred lines.

His father, seeing him turn off so much writing, felt curious enough to say to him, when he had finished, —

"Louis, what is all this writing for?"

Louis told him the story of his affair with Godfrey from beginning to end. Mr. Sinclair was delighted with his son's conduct and remarked, —

"My son, your acceptance of this imposition for the sake of another gives me more pleasure

Digitized by Google

than anything in your past life, except your late fruitful attempts to look to the Strong for strength, of which indeed, this act is not the least result."

This well merited praise thrilled Louis' heart with delight. He felt rewarded for the labor just performed, and encouraged to press vigorously along the road of self-conquest.

"Never," thought he, "in my days of self-indulgence, did I feel so happy as I do to-night."

That Louis should find a kind and degree of happiness in right action, which he had never found in wrong doing, though surprising to himself, was not a strange or uncommon thing. It is always so. Wrong doing may afford a passing *pleasure*, but it never yields *happiness* to any one. You cannot find a child or grown person on the face of the earth who can truthfully say, "*sinning makes me happy;*" but you may find thousands who could say, if they would

Digitized by Google

speak as they actually feel, "*sinning makes us miserable.*" On the other hand, tens of thousands of people who have left off doing wrong, and who are struggling hard to do right, can say, "*All our happiness comes to us through trusting in the Saviour, and in doing our duty by his help.*" Hence, you see, that Louis' experience was nothing strange — nothing which may not be yours also.

The next day at noon, when Peter and Sidney remained in at the recess, they and their teacher were surprised to see Godfrey stay in too.

"Why don't you go out, Warren?" inquired Mr. Mildman; Sidney and Peter are here in your stead."

"I prefer to suffer my own punishment, sir," replied Godfrey, haughtily.

"O, very well! De Grey! Clinton! You are excused from bearing this boy's punishment!"

Digitized by Google

The two boys thus addressed, went out followed by their teacher, who locked the door on Godfrey. They heard him sigh as he passed them, and they knew that Godfrey's unyielding pride had given him pain.

"Why! How is this?" asked Robert Warren, as his two friends came into the playground.

"Goddie says he'd rather bear his own punishment," replied Peter.

"Stuffy, isn't he?" queried young Wallace.

"Proud as Lucifer!" observed another boy.

"I don't like him one bit," added young Winter.

"I wonder if he means to write his imposition too?" said Sidney. "Do you know, Robert?"

"I can't say," replied Godfrey's brother. "He keeps as dark as the inside of an oyster lately. I don't know any more than you."

"This is what he meant last night when we heard him say, "I'll do it," observed Louis to Sidney.

Digitized by Google

"I suppose so. Well let him do it," replied Sidney, "who cares."

Thus it appeared that Godfrey with all his pride and ambition to excel had not now either the respect or love of his schoolmates. The better they knew him the less they liked him. Of what value to him was all his pride?

But while the boys went on discussing his conduct outside, Godfrey was busy inside cherishing those very feelings which made him an object of such dislike to others. He had made up his mind to bear all his own punishment, and so, as soon as he was alone, he began working on his imposition of which he had written nearly one half the night before.

"There," said he, after writing the four hundredth line. "I'll finish this thing to-night. I won't let any substitute crow over me."

He folded his paper and placed it in his desk. Then, after looking cautiously at the windows, he crept stealthily to Louis' desk, and, taking

Digitized by Google

out his grammar, turned over its pages and tore out a leaf. As he restored the book to its place, he said half aloud, —

"There, Mr. Louis, get your lesson to-night if you can. I guess I'll fix you to-morrow."

Just as he uttered these words the click of the lock warned him that his teacher was coming in. The door opened and Mr. Mildman entered in time to see him hurriedly taking his seat. Godfrey looked confused. To conceal his confusion he pretended to be very busy with a book which was lying open before him.

Mr. Mildman quickly perceived that something was wrong, for you know that it is very difficult for a boy to deceive an experienced teacher. Glancing his eyes along the desks and floor, he perceived a bit of crumpled paper near Louis' desk. Without appearing to go out of his way, he passed the spot and adroitly dropping his handkerchief on the paper, picked both up together. Then spreading the paper

Digitized by Google

on his own desk he saw that the crumpled paper was the leaf of a grammar, and that it contained the lesson for the next day's recitation.

He looked at Godfrey and noticed that he was feeling his pockets as if in search of something, and that his face was much flushed. "Ah!" thought he, "that bad boy has torn this leaf from somebody's book. Probably Sinclair's, to prevent him from getting to-morrow's lesson. He is a radically bad boy."

At that moment the janitor rung the school bell, and the boys began streaming in. So, without saying a word, Mr. Mildman placed the crumpled leaf in his desk and went on with school business.

Godfrey was in a state of torment all that afternoon. He could not tell what he had done with the leaf. Had he left it in the book? Had it fallen to the floor? Was it in Louis' desk? Had the teacher found it? These questions were darts piercing him to the quick. Who need to envy a bad boy?

Digitized by Google

That afternoon when Louis went out of school, he was surprised to see Godfrey approach him with a smile and to hear him say, —

"Louis, let us be friends!"

"I have no objection," replied Louis, with as much warmth as he could command.

"I'm going to get up a grand chestnutting party, will you go, Louis?"

"I will if I can."

"You're a brick, Louis. I always thought you were. My party comes off next Saturday. I'll let you know about it to-morrow. Good night?"

"Good night, Goddie," replied Louis, much softened by the seeming kindness of Godfrey's manner, and greatly wondering what it all meant.

The secret of it all was, that Godfrey had that afternoon awoke to the fact that he was making himself obnoxious to his schoolmates. This discovery troubled him, for popularity was

Digitized by Google

one of the objects of his ambition. Hence, he had resolved to change his manner toward the boys, especially toward Louis, whom he most hated. To speak plainly, he had determined to play the part of a hypocrite.

That evening, Louis toiled through another hundred lines of the imposition, and then turned to his grammar lesson. To his astonishment, the leaf which contained it was gone, as you already know.

"This is queer," said he to himself. "My grammar is as good as new, and never had a scrap torn from it before. This leaf has been torn out by some one. Who could have done it? Could Godfrey? He might. He was in school alone through the recess. Gould he have done it to make me trip to-morrow? It don't seem possible. But who else could it be? And he so friendly to-day. Well, well, who would have thought it? What a bad chap he must be to use a fellow so!"

Digitized by Google

Louis then leaned his head upon his hand, and thought awhile. Presently he started up and said, —

"Good! my old grammar is in Pa's bookcase. I can get my lesson, after all."

So Louis, aided by his old grammar, got out his lesson and then, after saying his prayers, went to bed in that peaceful frame of mind which always comes to boys who, led by FAITH, walk in the path of DUTY.

The next morning at the grammar recitation, Mr. Mildman looked wistfully at Louis, expecting him to be at fault. But, to his surprise, the boy went through his lesson with that pleasing accuracy which is the result of application and memory. When the class was retiring, to Godfrey's secret dismay, Mr. Mildman said, —

"Sinclair, leave your grammar on my desk!"

Louis obeyed, and as he went to his seat Godfrey placed a paper on the teacher's desk.

Digitized by Google

"What is this, sir?" asked Mr. Mildman, sternly.

"My imposition, sir;" replied Godfrey, very coolly.

"Your imposition? Don't you know that Sinclair consented to do it for you?"

"Yes, sir; but I preferred to do it myself," rejoined Godfrey, with an air of triumph.

"Yourself! Godfrey Warren, you are your own enemy. Your heart seems insensible to the only power that can subdue it — the power of kindness. When that generous boy, Louis Sinclair, whom you had so meanly tried to injure, volunteered to bear a part of your punishment, I thought you would have so far seen the effects of your misconduct as to cease acting meanly toward him. But as it now appears, you are both untouched and unreformed. Did you ever see this leaf before?"

Here the teacher held up the leaf from Louis' grammar. Godfrey's face flushed as he replied,

Digitized by Google

"I don't know that I ever did, sir."

"I expected such a reply. I am not absolutely *sure* that you do know, but I have very strong reasons for suspecting that you do. However, I leave you to your reflections. I feel sadly sure that you could scarcely be in worse company than your own, and that you have great need to be *afraid of yourself*. Go to your seat, sir!"

Godfrey was stung by these sharp but merited rebukes, and he sat down with quivering lips and burning brow. Mr. Mildman handed Louis his grammar and said, in the hearing of all, —

"I found a leaf which evidently belongs to your book, on the floor when I came into the room at the close of yesterday's recess. Appearances would indicate that it was torn out by some one who wished to prevent you getting your lesson to-day. Who that was you can judge. I was glad the mean device failed. I

Digitized by Google

"I suppose I must, I promised him I would," replied Louis.

"What, after all his meanness towards you?" asked Peter. "I wouldn't go, if I had given him a thousand promises."

"Well, I don't want to, but I don't like to break my word. Honor bright, you know, Pete."

"Honor bright! Yes. That's very well when you are dealing with an honorable fellow. But with Godfrey Warren the case is different. He hasn't honor enough to cover the point of a needle."

"Perhaps not, Pete, but I have at least enough for that, and I shall keep my promise."

"Of course, you can do as you like, Lou; but I'm going nutting on my own hook, and Godfrey may go to grass, if he pleases."

The ringing of the school-bell put an end to the discussion among the boys. It was very clear that Godfrey had lost his influence over

Digitized by Google

most of them. Louis felt sorry that he had promised to go to his nutting party, but he thought it was best to keep his word, only he inwardly resolved not to have much to say to Godfrey.

It did not require much effort on his part to keep this purpose, for Godfrey, feeling that he had acted very meanly toward him, did not pay Louis much attention. His purpose to play the hypocrite failed. His party was not a very large one, and it went off "decidedly slow," as one of the boys expressed it. Louis, reporting it to Sidney, said it was a "complete fizzle." It only helped to convince Godfrey that his recent treatment of Louis had made him the most unpopular boy in school.

As the term advanced, the contest for the medals became more and more interesting. Louis had frequent struggles with his old adversary, the Enchanter, who tried to bind him, sometimes with one chain, and sometimes with another.

Digitized by Google

One afternoon Louis went into the cellar in search of a hammer, when, seeing the door of the refrigerator partly open, he peeped in. It had been a habit with him, formerly, to pay frequent visits to this receptacle of the family food; and many a tit-bit, found in it, had contributed to the gratification of his love of good eating. Thoughtlessly yielding to this old habit, he looked into it, on this occasion. His eye lighted on a dish of oysters.

"My!" he exclaimed, smacking his lips, "What beauties! Saddle-rocks and no mistake. Guess I must taste you, my splendid fellows, and find out if your taste is equal to your looks."

Then taking his pen-knife he picked up an oyster on the point and dropped it carefully into his mouth. After swallowing it, he wiped his lips and said,

"That was a rich, juicy fellow. I really believe I like oysters. Guess I'll try one more."

Digitized by Google

Another and another of the oysters were removed from the plate to his mouth until they were nearly gone. Then the question, "What will the folks say?" flashed for the first time into his mind. He shut the refrigerator, and saying to himself, "Who is to know that I ate 'em?" sneaked out of the cellar like a thief.

Of course there was much inquiry about the oysters when the time for preparing supper arrived. The cook with a rueful face went to Mrs. Sinclair, and putting her head in at the door said,

"If you plase, ma'am, somebody's been ateing the oysters."

"Eating the oysters, Kate? What do you mean?"

"And sure there isn't only a dozen left, ma'am, out of the half hundred ye bought this mornin'."

"That is strange, Kate. Perhaps the cat ate them?"

Digitized by Google

"Indade I don't know, ma'am. I only know the oysters is more than half gone."

"Well, it can't be helped, Kate," replied Mrs. Sinclair with a little sigh. "You may cook those which remain."

The cook left, and Mrs. Sinclair went on with her sewing, wondering who could have eaten the oysters. Once she looked inquiringly at Louis who was in the room, but he seemed busy, and she dismissed her momentary suspicion, saying to herself,

"It can't be. Once I should have suspected him, but not now."

Louis felt meanly. He saw that he had been overtaken by a fault. His old love of eating had led him to do a mean thing. He felt that he ought to confess it to his mother. But a wicked, stubborn spirit of pride took possession of him and he kept silence.

At the supper table Mrs. Sinclair apologized for the small number of the oysters by saying

Digitized by Google

that some one had filched most of what she had purchased from the refrigerator, and supposed that it might be the cat.

"A two-legged cat, I guess," dryly remarked Mr. Sinclair. "You had better keep a sharp eye on your servants, Mrs. Sinclair."

Louis felt his ears burning during this conversation. His conscience stung him. But he said nothing. A bad spirit controlled him. The good within his heart was for the time subdued by the evil.

It is not often that a wrong act stands alone in the life of any boy or girl. The first false step nearly always leads to the second, because when the heart submits to one temptation it is prepared to enter into another. This need not be if the boy who is overtaken by a fault would stop short, as soon as he comes to himself, and, say, "I have done wrong; I repent; I will seek forgiveness." Then if he would go at once to the Strong for Strength, he would find help

Digitized by Google

and be able to resist any new temptation. Louis did not do this, and, therefore, he fell very readily into further faults.

Having finished his tea, he felt that dislike to his own society which is so common to all wrong doers. Hence he shrank from the idea of going to his lesson books in the library. He wanted to get away from himself.

A well-known whistle outside the window came to his relief. "That's Pete," said he to himself; "I wonder what's up now. I'll go and see."

He slipped out from the library unobserved by his father, and went into the street.

"Louis, my hearty, there's fine fun up to-night," said Peter, placing his hand on his friend's shoulder.

"What is it, Pete?"

"We are going down the river to bob for eels."

"That's nice. Who's going?"

Digitized by Google

"Winter, Wallace, Bob Warren, and I. Will you go?"

"I hardly know, Pete, what to do. I haven't got out my lessons for to-morrow, yet."

"O get them in the morning for once, Louis, and go with us to-night," pleaded Peter. "It's a splendid night and we won't stay late."

"But I haven't any bob."

"I've got one for you."

"Well, come along!" said Louis, speaking sharply. The Good Voice in his heart was already protesting against his neglect of his lessons, and against his going without asking his father's consent. His decision was made with that sudden energy with which evil doers always resist the protests of their better nature.

Peter led Louis to the corner of the road which led down to the brook that ran to the river. There they found the other boys, except that Godfrey and not Robert Warren was one of them. They hailed Louis with great glee.

Digitized by Google

Godfrey, still determined to recover his lost popularity if possible, handed him a "bob," and said,

"Come, Louis, let us be friends once more. I did treat you rather meanly I confess, but I'll do the right thing in future. Give us your hand my hearty, and let us make up!"

Louis, who never held a grudge long against any one, took his hand, and said,

"All right, Goddie, let us be friends!"

Still Louis was hardly satisfied with this "make up," and as soon as he could he contrived to get to Peter's side and say,

"Pete, you told me Bob Warren was to be in your party. You knew he wasn't coming, you cheat!"

"Don't be mad, Louis. I did cheat you a little, because I thought, maybe, you wouldn't like to come with Goddie. But Goddie means to be all right now. I've 'made up' with him again, and so must you. He says he'll be a real brick, always."

Digitized by Google

Louis thought that Peter was getting wrong again in spite of all his promises, or he would not have lied about Godfrey. He was about to say so, but the thought that he was himself again on the wrong track, checked him, and he walked on in silence. It is always thus. The boy who is going wrong, can and does help others to walk in the same direction, but he cannot help any one to walk in the right way. Being wrong himself, his influence must be evil and not good.

The party soon reached the brook where they found their boat. It was the one they had built during their "emigrant" life in vacation time. Near to where she was fastened was a boat house owned by Mr. Scolville. While Winter and Wallace were getting the boys' boat ready, Godfrey sauntered near the boat house. Presently he shouted,

"Peter, Fred, Ned, Louis, come here!"

The boys ran towards him, asking, "What's up now?"

Digitized by Google

"Something grand!" replied Godfrey. "Old Noll's boat house is unlocked and his skiff has oars in her. She is a heap better than our scow, and we can take her just as well as not."

"What will Mr. Scollville say?" queried Louis.

"Who cares?" replied Godfrey.

"He'll never know a word about it," added Peter.

"Old Noll goes to bed soon after sundown," said Winter, "and won't know whether we take his boat or our own. It certainly won't hurt the boat just to run down the river and back."

"It isn't right!" rejoined Louis, "to take her without permission."

"Pooh!" exclaimed Godfrey, "You are over nice, Mr. Louis. Any one would think, to hear you talk, that we were going to *steal* the boat, instead of to borrow her for a few hours."

"We shall *steal the use of her*," persisted Louis.

Digitized by Google

"What a dear old moral philosopher you are, Louey," said Godfrey, patting his companion's shoulder. "But you are wrong; who ever heard that to borrow and to steal are the same things?"

"Nobody," replied Peter. "It's all stuff. Louis' head is muddled with study. He don't see clear. Come boys! Let us push old Noll into the water. Heave, ho!"

"Heave ho! Let her go!" shouted Godfrey, joining the others as they — Louis excepted — pushed the skiff down the bank.

Louis was no doubt right in his views about the act of taking Mr. Scolville's boat. They were stealing the use of the boat, and the act was thievish at least in spirit. Louis should have maintained his ground, and if he failed to convince the rest, should have gone directly home. His better judgment urged him to do this, but his love of the sport they were seeking was strong, and it conquered. He quietly

Digitized by Google

took his seat in the skiff, and the whole party was soon descending the brook to the river.

It was a lovely night. The sky was cloudless and spangled with myriads of stars. There was a pleasant westerly breeze, and the air was just cool enough to be comfortable. Everything without was calculated to yield the party pleasure, but not one of them was really happy. They all knew they were wronging Mr. Scolville. Louis in addition to this, felt that he was neglecting his lessons, doing what his parents would object to, and that he had been guilty of a mean act, which he had not yet confessed; of course, neither he nor the others were in possession of very perfect enjoyment. Wrong doing is always a bitter herb in the dish of pleasure.

In due time they reached what Godfrey said was the "best bobbing ground on the river.' The anchor was dropped, lanterns lighted, "bobs" prepared, and the "bobbing" began

Digitized by Google

in good earnest. Eels were both plentiful and hungry. They were hauled in quite numerrously, and, forgetting everything else, the party began to have what Peter called "a jolly time."

After some time Godfrey threw down his bob, and opening a basket he had brought with him, produced some nice ham sandwiches. This treat was hailed merrily.

"Godfrey, you are the king of good fellows," said Walter.

"Godfrey always was a trump at heart," added Peter.

"Trumps or no trumps I go in for the sandwiches," said Winter, laughing as well as a mouthful of bread and meat would permit.

"So do I," added Louis.

While engaged in eating and joking, the boys did not observe that the tide was rapidly running out, for, you should know, that the river at this place was within reach of tide water. It was

Digitized by Google

within ten miles of the sea. Presently the boat touched bottom.

"Hilloa!" exclaimed Godfrey, seizing an oar, "the tide is setting out and we are getting aground. Take your oars, boys, and push her into the creek! Quick!"

The boys obeyed, but the boat did not. They had been fishing on a flat several yards from the channel, through which the tide ebbed and flowed, and were fairly aground on the mud.

"We are in a fix, boys," said Godfrey. "We shall have to stay here, at least, four or five hours until the tide comes in."

"Is that so?" asked Louis, very earnestly.

"That's so, without the least bit of a mistake," replied young Wallace.

"Oh dear!" groaned Louis, "what will my mother say? She will be frightened to death!"

"Of course she will," said Godfrey with a sneer. "She doesn't know you are out."

This sneering reply met with no sympathy

Digitized by Google

from the other boys, for they knew that their absence through the night would cause great alarm to all their parents. Moreover, the night air was growing chilly, and having no overcoats they were far from being comfortable. But they could do nothing but wait and shiver until the flood tide should make their return practicable. To keep as comfortable as possible they laid down in the bottom of the boat as near to each other as they could, except Louis, who sat by himself in the stern of the skiff.

"During those long, still hours he once more looked into his life and character. He thought of his weakness, his faults, his reformation, and his late fall into evil, until with tearful eyes and deep feeling he renewed his purposes to avoid further wrong doing, and to pursue after right, pure, noble character as the great end and object of his life. His penitence was sincere, and his trust in his All Merciful Father and Saviour as simple as the faith of childhood.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVI.

WHO WON THE PRIZES?

ONE of Louis' old habits was especially troublesome to him, as the autumn advanced, and the mornings became cold. He had always loved to lie late in bed. To take a nap between the first and second breakfast bell had been his particular delight. Of course this made him late at the breakfast table, and not unfrequently late at school. If he would win a medal, this habit must be conquered.

To a boy who does not care to "nap it," in the morning, this conquest appears an easy matter. Louis found it otherwise. At night he would resolve to get up promptly. But when the bell waked him, his resolution was

Digitized by Google

weaker than a hair. He would open his eyes, yawn, turn round, bury his head in the pillow, and murmuring to himself, "I will take a very short nap, just five minutes," drop asleep. As you might expect, his five minutes lasted until the second bell rang, thirty minutes later.

Then he would start, rub his eyes, exclaim, "O, dear! I have slept too long," spring out of bed, hurry on his clothes, only half wash his face and hands, and get to the breakfast table too late for prayers.

Stung with shame, he would renew his resolution, and keep it for a few succeeding mornings. Then he would be conquered again, and again he would renew the fight.

One morning he felt quite discouraged, and as he sat down late to his breakfast, he exclaimed:

"Pa, I'm ashamed of myself. I haven't manliness enough to get up when I'm called in the morning."

Digitized by Google

His father looked smilingly upon him, and replied, "I guess you have, my son."

"I don't see it, pa."

"I do, my son."

Louis looked at his father, as if he wished to know where to find his own manliness. Presently, his father added:

"The fact that you get up in good season four mornings out of seven, is proof enough to me, that you can do so every morning, *if you will*."

"But I do will, pa?" queried Louis, very gravely.

"Perhaps you do not will in the right spirit, my son?"

"I don't know, pa. Please tell me what that means?"

"It means, my son, that you *will* to get up, depending on the help of your Heavenly Father, for strength to keep your purpose."

"I never thought of that, pa. It is such a

Digitized by Google

little thing, I never thought of praying about it!"

"A little thing, Louis? You are mistaken, my dear boy. Getting up in time may be a little thing in itself, but as an act of self-conquest, it is a great thing. Viewed in this light, there are no things so little as to be unfit for you to tell God about. Tell him of this weakness, and ask him to help you to overcome it."

"And do you think he will help me, so that I shall be able to get up every morning, pa?"

"No doubt of it, my son, provided you *promptly* use the strength he gives you. When you hear the bell, instead of stopping to talk with yourself about another nap, spring at once from your bed. There is nothing like prompt action in battling with the idle habit of lying in bed late."

Louis thanked his father for this sensible advice, and resolved to put it in practice.

Accordingly, on the evening of that day, he

Digitized by Google

told his Father in heaven of his love of sleep, and begged help to overcome it. After doing this he went to sleep, believing that he should be able to conquer his old foe in the morning. I think it quite likely that this faith was the answer to his prayer.

In the morning, the bell roused him from his slumbers, as usual. He opened his eyes, and then his old enemy, Indolence, whispered, —

"Turn over and take a short nap."

"I won't!" cried Louis, inspired by the recollection of his resolution.

The next moment he was out of bed. The victory was won. What was better still, he had taken a lesson in the art of war. "I see how to do it now," said he to himself. "Prayer at night, and promptitude in the morning, are weapons that Indolence can't stand."

This victory was final and complete. I do not mean that he never had to struggle with himself again, but I do mean, that ever after-

Digitized by Google

wards he was ready to go down stairs at the ringing of the second bell. A few weeks of persistent *rising at once when he awoke*, formed a habit, which finally made it easy for him to continue in this way of well-doing.

He also maintained his new habits of study. Of course, he had to struggle against his old idle ways. Sometimes he would almost fall back into them; but encouraged by his parents and teacher, animated by his purpose to be an educated Christian boy, and spurred by his desire to win one or more of the medals, he would start again on the track of duty. The change in his conduct was very marked, and as the time for the Academy examination approached, a very general interest was taken in his success, both among the boys, and in the social circle to which his parents belonged.

The weeks soon rolled round, in spite of the saying, often repeated among the students, "Vacation will never come." The examination

Digitized by Google

began the week before Christmas, and lasted three days. Quite a number of the citizens attended. Among them was Uncle Joe, with his grave, happy face, Mr. Sinclair and his wife, Sidney's father and mother, and even old farmer Scolville's wrinkled face was visible among the crowd.

Louis stood the test of examination finely, all things considered. He excelled on the later lessons of the term. His former neglect showed itself in several things, particularly in orthography and arithmetic. Uncle Joe probably expressed the general opinion, when he remarked, —

"Sidney De Grey is the most accurate scholar in the Academy; Louis Sinclair stands next. Had he always been as studious as he has been lately, he would have trod pretty closely on Sidney's heels."

In addition to the three medals, a prize for the best declamation had been offered by the

Digitized by Google

trustees. All the prizes were to be awarded at the close of the declamation exercises, which were public, on the evening of the last day of the examination.

The largest hall in the village was crowded on that evening, which was so joyous to the young people of Lindendale. Great pains had been taken to dress the hall. Its walls were festooned with evergreen. Curiously wrought among the festoons was this legend:

PATIENT INDUSTRY CONQUERS INDOLENT TALENT.

The spacious platform was gay with flags and green-house flowers. The boys were dressed in white pants and blue jackets. Everything that skill and taste, combined with economy, could suggest, had been done to make the place attractive, and the occasion pleasant.

"What uncouth creatures boys are!" observed Clara De Grey, to a bevy of misses seated around her in a conspicuous part of the hall. "Look! There isn't one in that crowd

Digitized by Google

sitting gracefully. They all act as if their hands were in their way, and their feet didn't belong to them. The horrid fellows!"

"You don't mean to say that my brother is either horrid or ungraceful, do you?" asked Julia De Grey.

"Well, cousin Sid, is, perhaps, an exception, but then, he owes his grace of manner to his sister," replied Clara, laughing.

"I think Louis Sinclair is every bit as graceful as Sidney," observed Nellie Warren. "He isn't a bit horrid."

"He's too fat to be graceful," retorted Julia.

A general titter followed this remark. Before the girls were ready to renew their criticisms, the call-bell rung, and Mr. Mildman announced that the exercises would be opened with prayer, by the Rev. Jacob Jones.

The prayer was followed with singing by the boys. Then came the declamations, beginning with the smaller boys.

Digitized by Google

They did pretty much as such boys generally do when well trained. Mr. Mildman's system of training showed itself in the clearness of each boy's enunciation. Every word was distinctly uttered, consequently every boy was heard and understood in all parts of the hall.

As was natural, the interest of the audience centered in the larger boys, because with them was the most highly developed talent. And they spoke remarkably well. Young Wallace spoke a comic piece entitled, "I'm a politician," which elicited much applause, because of the excellent mimicry of the speaker.

Godfrey spoke a poetical piece called, "Eliza," very correctly, but with so much pompous action, and such extravagant passion, that every good judge in the audience pronounced it "overdone," although some of the boys declared it was "done grandly." Boys often mistake the brilliancy of conceit and affectation, for the solid gold of talent.

Digitized by Google

Sidney De Grey spoke "Genevra, from Rogers' Italy," and Louis gave them Longfellow's "Old Clock on the Stairs." Both of them rendered their pieces finely in every respect. Each had thoroughly studied his part. Sidney drew tears from all eyes, as he described the disappearance of the merry little bride, and the subsequent finding of her remains in the old chest. Louis hushed his audience to a silence which was almost painful, with the "Ever, never, never, forever," of the venerable old clock on the stairs."

Mr. Mildman appointed a committee to decide on the merits of the declaimers, and to award the prize. While those gentlemen were arriving at a decision, he awarded the medals. After a brief address to the boys, in which he showed that the highest reward of study is not a medal or prize of any kind, but the mental growth and power which come from it to the student. "Still," he added, "a prize is not to

Digitized by Google

be despised, because it symbolizes the diligence, obedience, and perseverance of the winners. These qualities, strengthened by the effort to win the prize, are to the prize itself, what the gold of the coin is to the stamp on its surface. Hence, my dear boys, I wish you ever to set a higher value on the *character which wins, than on the prize which is won.* The value of the latter, can be estimated in dollars and cents, the former, is more precious than rubies."

"The trustees and committee of examination, have unanimously awarded the silver medal for general excellence in study, to Sidney De Grey"—

Here the scholars interrupted Mr. Mildman with an outburst of cheers for Sidney, which was so hearty, as to show that they acknowledged the justice of the award. When they were quiet again, he proceeded, —

"The silver medal for the best composition, is awarded to Louis Sinclair."

Digitized by Google

Huzzas for Louis, three times repeated, showed that Louis had not only conquered his old enemy, the Enchanter, but that he also had won the good will of his companions in study. Mr. Mildman, when silence was restored, held up the third medal and said, —

"The medal for the faithful observance of the rules of the school, is awarded to Sidney De Grey. He has not missed a single session; he has no late mark; he has not a solitary discredit mark on account of ill-behavior. I take great pleasure in acknowledging the justice of this award."

The applause for Sidney was almost uproarious for a few moments; not a few of the audience joining their voices to those of the boys.

The committee on the declamation prize now came in, and reported as follows:

"Your committee found it very difficult to decide between two of the speakers, Masters

Digitized by Google

De Grey and Sinclair. Both were alike excellent in manner and spirit, but, considering that the piece spoken by Sinclair is more difficult for a boy to render properly, than that spoken by De Grey, they have awarded the prize to Louis Sinclair."

Again the hall rang with plaudits, and Louis felt more than rewarded for all his struggles after self-conquest. I cannot say that he was joyous, for as his mind ran back to the close of the preceding year's term, he contrasted his indifference and idleness at that time, with his present success, and mingled feelings of shame and gratitude swelled his heart. He burst into tears. But, as he afterwards told his father, "those tears were happier than the hollow merriment of former days."

The exercises being ended, the scholars, with their families, were invited to partake of a simple collation, in a large room below. You may be sure they had a merry time over their

Digitized by Google

cakes and ice cream. One face alone wore a gloomy aspect. Godfrey, not having won a single prize, could not, or rather *would* not, enter into the joy of others. But no one disturbed his gloomy mood. Sidney and Louis were the heroes of the hour. The other boys seemed as if they would never be wearied examining their medals; and compliments were showered upon them from all lips. They certainly enjoyed the spoils of victory, without any drawbacks, because they had been fairly and honorably won.

Just before the happy party broke up, Uncle Joe, meeting Louis a little apart, placed his hand on his head, and said very solemnly:

"May God bless thee, my boy!" Then looking earnestly into his eyes, he added, "Louis, remember, that the glory of this great success belongs to Him by whose strength you won the victory."

"I do, sir," replied Louis, seriously.

Digitized by Google

Uncle Joe went out. Clara De Grey followed. As she passed Louis, she handed him a note and said, —

"Louis, I am delighted with your success. Good night."

"I thank you, Miss De Grey. Good night," replied the boy, as Clara flitted away after her father.

When Louis reached home, he found that Clara's note was an invitation to a party and Christmas-tree, on Christmas eve. He exclaimed:

"A Christmas party at Uncle Joe's! Won't it be grand! Pa, may I go?"

"Certainly, my son. There is no safer place for you than at that good man's house."

"I know it," replied Louis, "and then Clara is such a merry creature! There's always lots of fun where she is. She is as lively as a bird. I'm glad I'm invited, and that I can go. Thank you."

Digitized by Google

"Louis!" said Mr. Sinclair, as he placed his hand on his son's head, "you have made me very happy to-night."

"I'm glad, pa," replied Louis in a subdued tone.

"And me too," said Mrs. Sinclair, her eyes sparkling with tears. "Three months ago I should not have even *dreamed* of the things I have witnessed this evening. They seem almost too good to be real."

"Three months ago, Louis," added Mr. Sinclair, "you were a burden on our hearts. Your character was full of faults. We trembled for your future. We feared you would become a useless man. Now we rejoice over you and look to your coming manhood with hope. You are the joy of our lives, my son."

"I'm so glad," whispered Louis, feeling almost choked with the emotions of gladness which welled up from his heart. He was plucking the fruit of right action, and it was very sweet.

Digitized by Google

"Let us thank God!" said Mr. Sinclair.

And then that happy household kneeled around the family altar and worshipped the Father of that great family which is being gathered out of all nations, and which will finally dwell in the unity of love in the Eternal City.

Louis' dreams were very pleasant that night; and prominent among their imagery was an enormous Christmas tree hung with numerous beautiful gifts. In his eagerness to count these gifts the dreamer awoke to find that the sun was up, and that the echoes of the first breakfast bell were ringing through the halls of his pleasant home.

If you wish to know what happened at Clara De Grey's Christmas party, you must read the next volume of the Lindendale Stories.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Valuable Books for the Young,

PUBLISHED BY

GRAVES & YOUNG,

24 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

The Brookside Series.

BY AUNT HATTIE.

4 volumes, 16mo. Handsomely illustrated. Price $5.00.

Vol. 1. Hole in the Pocket.

" 2. Stopping the Leak.

" 3. Lost, but Found.

" 4. Fashion and Folly.

The above series are intensely interesting to both old and young, and are especially adapted to the wants of the present day.

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 Cornhill, Boston.

Digitized by Google

Valuable Books for the Young,

PUBLISHED BY

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

THE ELMWOOD STORIES.

4 vols., 16mo. Handsomely illustrated. Price $5.00.

Vol. 1. Mill Agent.

" 2. Out of Prison.

" 3. Horace Welford.

" 4. The Huntingdons.

THE YOUNG MAN'S FRIEND.

NEW SERIES. By Rev. D. C. EDDY, D. D.

1 vol., 12mo. Price $1.50.

This book is especially adapted as a gift book to young men, as it will prove itself a faithful counsellor and friend.

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 Cornhill, Boston.

Digitized by Google

Valuable Books for the Young,

PUBLISHED BY

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

THE GYPSY SERIES.

BY MISS E. STUART PHELPS.

4 volumes, 16mo. Handsomely illustrated. Price $5.00.

VOL. 1 GYPSY BREYNTON.

" 2. GYPSY'S COUSIN JOY.

" 3. GYPSY'S SOWING AND REAPING

" 4. GYPSY AT THE GOLDEN CRESCENT.

This is one of the most entertaining series of juveniles published in many years, and places the author among the first as a writer for children.

Each volume sold separately from the set.

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 Cornhill, Boston.

Digitized by Google

Valuable Books for the Young,

PUBLISHED BY

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

The Arlington Stories.

4 vols., 16mo. Handsomely illustrated. Price $5.50.

Vol. 1. One-Armed Hugh.

" 2. Wheel of Fortune.

" 3. Boys at Dr. Murray's.

" 4. The Deserted Mill.

Any of the above sold separately from the set.

Games and Toy Books.

Fun for Winter Evenings, or Games for the Little Folks. Square paper covers. .25 cts.

Sociables for our Young Folks. Square paper covers. 33 cts.

Puzzles for Household Pets. Square paper covers. 25 cts.

The Chinese Puzzle. 10 cts.

Card Dominoes, for Home Amusement. 10 cts.

Freddie and his Pets, or Stories for Little Boys. 15 cts.

Addie and her Pets, or Stories for Little Girls. 15 cts.

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 Cornhill, Boston.

Digitized by Google

NEW BOOKS.

AUNT HATTIE'S LIBRARY FOR HER LITTLE FRIENDS. By AUNT HATTIE. 6 vols., in box. Price $3.00.

Lilly's Birthday.	Maggie and the Mice.
The Sheep and Lambs.	The Lost Kittie.
The Chest of Tools.	Ida's New Shoes.

THE RAINFORD SERIES. By GLANCE GAYLORD. 3 vols. 16mo., illustrated, in a box. Price $1.50.

Vol. 1. Gilbert Starr and his Lessons.
" 2. Gilbert's Last Summer at Rainford.
" 3. Will Rood's Friendship.

THE LINDENDALE STORIES. By LAWRENCE LANCEWOOD. 5 vols., 16mo. Illustrated.

Vol. 1. Sidney de Grey, } 3 vols. in box. Price $3.75.
" 2. Nellie Warren, }
" 3. Louis Sinclair, }
" 4. Cousin Clara, } in press.
" 5. Peter Clinton, }

GYPSY'S YEAR AT THE GOLDEN CRESCENT. By Miss E. STUART PHELPS. 1 vol. 16mo. Illust'd. Price $1.25.

WILL ROOD'S FRIENDSHIP. By GLANCE GAYLORD. 1 vol. 16mo. Illustrated. Price $1.50.

LOUIS SINCLAIR. By LAWRENCE LANCEWOOD, Esq. 1 vol. 16mo. Illustrated. Price $1.25.

THE DESERTED MILL AND POTTER PARTY. By E. L. LLEWELLYN. 1 vol. 16mo. Illustrated. Price $1.25.

MONARCHIES OF EUROPE. By JOHN S. C. ABBOTT. 3 vols. small 8vo, in box. Price $7.50.

EMPIRE OF AUSTRIA. 1 vol. small 8vo. Price $2.50.

EMPIRE OF RUSSIA. 1 vol. small 8vo. Price $2.50.

EMPIRE OF ITALY. 1 vol. small 8vo. Price $2.50.

WORDS OF JESUS. By MACDUFF. 18mo. Red edges. Price 50 cts.

MIND OF JESUS. By MACDUFF. 18mo. Red edges. Price 50 cts.

CHURCH POLITY. A Treatise on Christian Churches and Christian Ministry. By Rev. HENRY J. RIPLEY. 1 vol. 16mo. Price $1.25.

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 *Cornhill, Boston.*

Digitized by Google

Valuable Books for the Young,

PUBLISHED BY

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

GEORGEY'S MENAGERIE.

BY MRS. MADELINE LESLIE.

6 vols., 18mo. Handsomely illustrated. In a neat box, with illuminated cover. Price $3.75.

Vol. 1. The Lion.
" 2. The Wolf.
" 3. The Bear.
Vol. 4. The Camel.
" 5. The Deer.
" 6. The Elephant.

The Rainford Series.

BY GLANCE GAYLORD.

3 vols., 16mo., illustrated. In a box. Price $4.50.

Vol. 1. GILBERT STARR AND HIS LESSONS.
" 2. GILBERT'S LAST SUMMER AT RAINFORD.
" 3. WILL ROOD'S FRIENDSHIP.

AUNT HATTIE'S LIBRARY FOR HER LITTLE FRIENDS.

BY AUNT HATTIE.

6 volumes, in a box. Price $3.00.

Lilly's Birthday.
The Sheep and Lambs.
The Chest of Tools.
Maggie and the Mice.
The Lost Kittie.
Ida's New Shoes.

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 Cornhill, Boston.

Digitized by Google

Valuable Books for the Young,

PUBLISHED BY

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

THE PERCY FAMILY.

BY

REV. D. C. EDDY, D.D.

A VISIT TO IRELAND. 1 vol. 16mo. "This volume is the first of a series. A merchant takes his two children upon a European tour, who visit places of interest, and record the result of their observation and discovery. The book is written in an easy and familiar style, in language suited to the apprehension of the class of readers for whom it is designed."

ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND. 1 vol. 16mo. "The present is the second volume in this neat illustrated series of books for young persons, though each volume is complete in itself. Though England and Scotland is the subject of the book, the reader will find in it much relating to life and phenomena in those countries, which they have not seen before."

PARIS TO AMSTERDAM. 1 vol. 16mo. "We hail with pleasure another volume of this admirable series. We think Dr. Eddy was careful to note those things in his travels which he knew would be of special interest to Young America."

BALTIC TO VESUVIUS. 1 vol. 16mo. "This volume represents the Percy Family as passing through the great cities of Germany, Prussia, Austria, and Italy. The various dialogues are accompanied by engravings of the prominent features alluded to, and are thus rendered exceedingly attractive to the young."

ALPS AND THE RHINE. 1 vol. 16mo. "This is the concluding volume of the Percy Family. They combine much useful information for the young, with entertainment of an attractive character."

The above 5 vols. in neat box with illuminated cover.

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 Cornhill, Boston.

Digitized by Google

Valuable Books for the Young,

PUBLISHED BY

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

THE CEDAR BROOK STORIES;

OR,

THE CLIFFORD CHILDREN.

By A. S. M.

AUTHOR OF "ONLY A PAUPER."

In five volumes, 18mo. Handsomely illustrated.

Volume 1,	LITTLE SEED SOWERS.
Volume 2,	SEED GROWING.
Volume 3,	SEED BEARING FRUIT.
Volume 4,	SOWING IN NEW FIELDS.
Volume 5,	FRANK GONE TO THE WAR.

The five volumes handsomely illustrated, in a neat box with illuminated cover.

This entirely new series is of sterling merit, and cannot fail of improving as well as interesting the young

"The stories in these five volumes form a series, giving the history of the Clifford children from an early age until they become men and women. It is a very interesting series."

THE MILL AGENT.

By M. A. D.

In one volume, 16mo.

"The present volume far surpasses any of the author's previous works, for strength of thought and delineation of the peculiarities of human nature. Aside from its moral worth, it is charmingly entertaining both for youth and maturity."

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 Cornhill, Boston.

Digitized by Google

Valuable Books for the Young,

PUBLISHED BY

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

THE LESLIE STORIES.

BY

MRS. MADELINE LESLIE.

EARNING AND SPENDING. 1 vol. 16mo.; handsomely illustrated. "This is the title of an interesting and instructive volume. The author always writes wholesome books for young or old, and the aim is to inculcate a lofty purpose in life, Christian integrity, and usefulness."

UP THE LADDER. 1 vol. 16mo.; handsomely illustrated. "This is a volume adapted to inspire in boys a love for what is right and honorable. It points out the effects of different kinds of training and habits, and makes many practical suggestions of great value to the young."

NEVER GIVE UP. 1 vol. 16mo.; handsomely illustrated. "This is a fiction founded upon fact, and presents in the career of one newsboy a brilliant example for the imitation and encouragement of all boys who have an ambition to become useful and respected."

WORTH AND WEALTH; or, JESSIE DORR. 1 vol. 16mo.; handsomely illustrated. "This is one of the well-known Leslie Stories. The tone of the narrative is thoroughly religious, and the incidents of such a touching and impressive character as is like to benefit the juvenile reader."

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS. 1 vol 16mo.; handsomely illustrated. "This volume shows what a sanctified ambition can accomplish by a right application of industry and perseverance."

The above five volumes in a neat box with illuminated cover.

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 Cornhill, Boston.

Digitized by Google

Valuable Books for the Young,

PUBLISHED BY

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

THE

LINDENDALE STORIES.

BY

LAWRENCE LANCEWOOD, ESQ.

To be completed in five 16mo volumes.

Volume 1, SIDNEY DEGREY; or, the Rival Schoolboys. The story of a boy who believed a pure character to be the prize of life, is now ready. To be followed soon by

Volume 2, NELLIE WARREN.

Volume 3, LOUIS SINCLAIR.

Volume 4, COUSIN CLARA.

Volume 5, PETER CLINTON.

The high moral character of these volumes will commend them to every family, and to all interested in the improvement of the young. It is our belief that this series will at once take its place among the first juveniles in the country.

GRAVES AND YOUNG,

24 Cornhill, Boston.

Digitized by Google